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ABSTRACT

This conference proceedings compile presentations from a 2000 meeting of the American Montessori International of the United States, focusing on the Montessori view toward freedom and responsibility and addressing other issues of importance in Montessori education. The papers presented at the conference are: (1) "Strategies for You and Your School" (Charles Snowden, Jr.); (2) "Action-Oriented Agenda Keeps Board Meetings Moving" (Charles Snowden, Jr.); (3) "Forming and Charging the Board Committees" (Charles Snowden, Jr.); (4) "The Annual Agendas" (Charles Snowden, Jr.); (5) "The Intimacy of Responsibility" (Renilde Montessori); (6) "Freedom and Responsibility" (Margaret E. Stephenson); (7) "The Importance of Freedom in Our World Today" (Silvia Dubovoy); (8) "Active Discipline" (Silvana Montanaro); (9) "Theoretical Tenents [sic] of Freedom and Responsibility for the 6-12 Year Olds" (Phyllis Pottish-Lewis); (10) "Adolescent Theory: Erdkinder Outcomes" (David Kahn); (11) "The Role of the Teacher and the Role of the Assistant" (Annette Haines); (12) "Setting Limits--So Little Understood, So Greatly Needed" (Judi Orion); (13) "Freedom that Inspires Responsibility: Removing the Obstacles" (Cathryn Kasper); (14) "The Necessary Freedom To Become Montessori 'Erdkinder'" (Laurie Ewert-Krocker); (15) "Freeing the Child's Response-Ability: Celebrating the Natural Genius of Children" (Thomas Armstrong); (16) "Poised for Success--Building Character and Citizenship in Children" (John Rosemond); (17) "Bringing Out the Best in Your Child: Achievement Begins at Home" (John Rosemond); (18) "Spiritual Freedom and Moral Responsibility: A Most Glorious Counterpoint" (Eduardo Cuevas); (19) "Practical Applications of Freedom and Responsibility in the Elementary Years" (Phyllis Pottish-Lewis); (20) "Understanding the Nature of the Industry and the Special Opportunities It Presents" (Joe Vaz); (21) "Freedom To Develop" (Silvana Montanaro); (22) "Beyond Open House--Sharing Montessori's Perspective with Parents" (Carla Caudill-Waechter); and (23) "Some Conceptual Considerations in the Interdisciplinary Study of Immigrant Children" (Marcelo M. Suarez Orozco). Some papers contain references. (KB)

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freedom & responsibility

A GLORIOUS COUNTERPOINT

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AMI USA

Sheraton Colonial Hotel, Boston North
Boston, Massachusetts
July 20-23, 2000

AMI

Freedom & Responsibility

A Glorious Counterpoint

Margaret Elizabeth Stephenson Fund 2000

The Margaret Elizabeth Stephenson Fund 2000 (MES 2000) is the first financial aid fund to benefit AMI teacher trainees. With the establishment of this fund, students who meet the criteria will be eligible for partial scholarships at AMI training centers in the United States.

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Miss Margaret Elizabeth Stephenson

Margaret E. Stephenson is heralded as one of the greatest interpreters of the principles of Montessori education. In 1962, after studying with both Dr. Maria Montessori and Mr. Mario Montessori, she was commissioned to initiate training in the United States where, for almost 40 years, she has conducted both Primary and Elementary Training Courses.

UNESCO International Year for the Culture of Peace

We who understand Montessori at the deepest level know instinctively that we are citizens of the world. The work we do, which joins us together philosophically, extends to the very boundaries of the globe...and beyond. Because we are sensitively aware of our responsibility to all children everywhere, we seek to extend our confirmed values of a respectful culture of peace into the future.

Year 2000 was proclaimed *The International Year of the Culture of Peace* by the United Nations General Assembly. UNESCO is responsible for coordinating all activities related to this proclamation. One outstanding project exists, which calls for everyone's involvement. A group of Nobel Peace Prize winners joined together to help clarify the resolutions of the United Nations and make them applicable to all persons. They created *Manifesto 2000* which expresses a universal goal of peace. It is not governed by a higher authority, but instead, relies on each individual's commitment to the true meaning of freedom, and the responsibility to live in accordance with its intrinsic rules and pragmatic values. As stated, they are: respect for all life, rejection of violence, sharing with others, listening to understand each other, preserving the planet and rediscovering solidarity.

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CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

Thursday
July 20, 2000

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Administrator's Series
- *Strategies for You and Your School* • Charles Snowden, Jr., ISM

7:00 p.m.
- *The Intimacy of Responsibility* • Renilde Montessori

8:30 p.m.
Reception

Friday
July 21, 2000

9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
- *Freedom and Responsibility* • Margaret Stephenson

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- *The Importance of Freedom in Our World Today* • Silvia Dubovoy, Ph.D.

2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.
Seminar Sessions
- *Active Discipline* • Silvana Montanaro, M.D.
- *Freedom & Responsibility in the First Level of Development* • Silvia Dubovoy, Ph.D.
- *Theoretical Tenents of Freedom and Responsibility for the 6-12 Year-Olds* • Phyllis Pottish-Lewis
- *Adolescent Theory: Erdkinder Outcomes* • David Kahn
- *Educateurs sans Frontières* • Renilde Montessori, Camillo Grazzini, Hilla Patell
- *The Role of the Teacher and the Role of the Assistant* • Annette Haines, Ed.D.
- *Setting Tuition and Fulfilling Your Mission* • Charles Snowden, Jr., ISM

3:45 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Seminar Sessions
- *Setting Limits – So Little Understood, So Greatly Needed* • Judi Orion
- *Freedom that Inspires Responsibility: Removing the Obstacles* • Cathryn Kasper
- *Work for the 9-12 Year Olds* • Margaret Stephenson
- *The Necessary Freedom to Become Montessori Erdkinder* • Laurie Ewert-Krocker
- *Educateurs sans Frontières* • Renilde Montessori, Camillo Grazzini, Hilla Patell
- *Understanding Freedom and Responsibility* • Annette Haines, Ed.D.
- *Setting Tuition and Fulfilling Your Mission* (con't) • Charles Snowden, Jr., ISM

Saturday
July 22, 2000

9:00 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.
- *Freeing the Child's Response-Ability* • Thomas Armstrong, Ph.D.

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
- *Responsibility as the Foundation for True Freedom in Education* • Marsilia Palocci

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
- 9-12 Roundtable Discussion

Sunday
July 23, 2000

9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
- *Poised for Success – Building Character and Citizenship in Children* • *John Rosemond*

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Seminar Sessions
- *Bringing Out the Best in Your Child: Achievement Begins at Home* • John Rosemond
- *Spiritual Freedom and Moral Responsibility: A Most Glorious Counterpoint* • Eduardo Cuevas
- *Practical Applications of Freedom and Responsibility in the Elementary Years* • Phyllis Pottish-Lewis
- *Observation – When to Intervene* • Annette Haines, Ed. D.
- *Understanding the Nature of the Industry and the Special Opportunities it Presents* • Barbara Gordon, Joe Vaz

2:00 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Seminar Sessions
- *Teen-Proofing: Understanding and Managing your Teenager* • John Rosemond
- *Freedom to Develop* • Silvana Montanaro, M.D.
- *Beyond Open House and Orientation – Sharing Montessori's Perspective with Parents* • Carla Caudill-Waechter
- *The Prepared Environment – A Key to Independence* • Annette Haines, Ed.D.
- *How to Develop a School that Stresses Quality and Service to the Community* • Barbara Gordon, Joe Vaz

3:45 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

General Session
AMI/USA Research Update
Closing Panel • Renilde Montessori, Silvana Montanaro, M.D., Marsilia Palocci, and Margaret Stephenson
Closing Remarks • Virginia McHugh

7:30 p.m.

Banquet Address
- *Some Conceptual Considerations in the Interdisciplinary Study of Immigrant Children* • Marcelo M. Suárez Orozco, Ph.D.

Strategies for You and Your School

Charles Snowden, Jr., ISM

Pricing, Affordability, and Mission

Pricing should be setting tuition to cover costs for the kind of school you want.

Affordability is not really a mathematical computation but a family's willingness to pay that tuition.

A school with a well-defined and well-implemented mission stands out in the eyes of parents and students.

- The program has specific and unique characteristics
- The faculty believes in and delivers the requisite programs and services
- The quality of these services determines value to constituents

Five Questions To Ask Before Setting Tuition

- Why are we in business?
- Who are our customers?
- What will we offer them?
- Who will provide the service?
- What are the expected outcomes?

Erroneous premises employed in tuition setting:

- There is a traffic bearing point.
- Set the price we feel will be easily accepted, and then see what we can afford.
- Only one year's tuition should be considered at a time.
- Our past tuitions have been ideal.
- Pay careful attention to prices charged by other private/independent schools.
- Base any measure of capacity to pay on our own (trustee-parent) circumstances, those about whom we are concerned, and those who speak out the loudest (the "squeaky wheels").
- Inflation is the principal factor in the drive for tuition increase.
- Keep tuitions such that the greatest possible number of families can afford to pay the full price.
- If we maintain low tuition, those with greater capacity *will* donate at least to the extent of the higher tuitions we need – because it is deductible.
- Let's make only a token increase this year because we have taken heat for higher ones in the past ("give our parents a break").

The "Tuition Cap"

You will "reach the top" if:

- you do not offer quality programs
- you do not regularly inform parents about the quality
- you do not recognize that your parents are consumers
- you do not form a bond with parents
- you do not tell parents how you differ from public schools and other competitors
- you are not open with parents about your finances
- you do not seek parent advice and involvement
- you are not a good steward
- you are not prudent and wise
- you cannot justify that everything you do benefits students and parents
- you do not market your school constantly

Governance

Tuition setting: a true test of board leadership

All but a few schools suffer from inadequate funding. As a result, programs are limited or of lesser than desired quality, faculty must work at very low salaries, or classes are much larger than anyone wants. Have the courage to charge what it costs to operate the kind of school you want. Be responsible to those you are committed to serve.

Take the time to assess every element. Assign a board committee to settle on what *really* should constitute quality core programs and services at your school. At the same time, charge another committee to review your salary and compensation structure, determine needed changes, and estimate the personnel cost involved in the programs and services identified by the companion committee. Have both committees report to the Finance Committee and challenge it to develop a funding strategy. Finally, present the results to the board for a decision.

If your financial need calls for substantial tuition increase(s) and you are still gun-shy about a much larger hike than you have made in the past, at least go higher than you would otherwise have done. Test out these theories in your own environment . . . then do the *right* thing next year.

Insights on private school operation

The challenge of setting tuitions

Your board of governors bears responsibility for establishing tuitions. This is not an easy task. On the one hand, there is the goal of serving an identified market without excluding large numbers of families through prohibitive pricing. On the other hand, there is the goal of providing quality programs in an ever-demanding environment. In short, you want the best, but you are scared that setting higher tuitions will cause current families to withdraw and discourage prospective families from even applying.

The typical board meeting devoted to pricing begins with a review of the recurrent arguments for tuition increases:

- inflation;
- real-dollar salary improvement for faculty and key personnel;
- cost of new equipment, resources, and technology;
- need for additional personnel to improve services and program quality;
- higher cost in several areas of general operation.

The focus is the next year, compared with the past (known) year and the year currently unfolding. Discussions are influenced by what other local private schools charge and what schools similar to yours in the region charge. (Perhaps there is perspective on where your school sits nationally in a spectrum of schools.)

Board members then state positions based on their own experiences as business people and often as parents of enrolled children – all to the point of what they believe the "traffic will bear." Many give anecdotal accounts of finan-

cial stress experienced by a few families they know.

The debate frequently comes down to a battle between those who argued for a minimal increase but who were persuaded to move to a higher figure of "x" dollars, and an opposing group that argued for a much larger increase but gave in to pressure and moved down to a figure that is $25 above "x"...as if $25 per year is a significant difference!

We contend that boards that rely on this arbitrary "seat-of-the-pants" model are not serving their schools well. The pricing process should be based on many more and better researched premises than those underlying this scenario. This entire issue of *To The Point* details our thoroughly tested positions regarding tuition setting. The concepts have been successfully employed in hundreds of private schools of all types and sizes, urban and rural, in every region.

Your wallet vs. school need

On most boards, the majority of members are current parents. Such individuals add a great deal to the board: deep and abiding interest in the school, first-hand knowledge of student opinions and reactions (drawn from their own children and classmates), open lines of communication with other parents (often as much a consequence of the social activity of their spouse as their own interchanges), and conclusions drawn from observations made while attending events or simply visiting the school. Yet, many of these same individuals have a problem separating their family from what often are the best interests of the school.

For example, if their child has had a bad experience with a teacher, they find it difficult to believe that the school is well-served by that teacher. And, important to the topic of price-setting, they resist needed tuition hikes because they know the total impact on their own wallet – and recognize that they are not candidates for financial aid.

If you are a current parent as well as a member of the board, you must put aside this "conflict of interest" and weigh what is best for the school and its service to the total constituency.

Financial Management

Financial equilibrium: walking the budget tightrope

Private-independent school enrollment is generally healthy. Classrooms are full; waiting pools are ample. The comfort level thereby produced in many boards and administrations can be dangerous.

The following factors caution against complacency. At the same time, they argue for an even heavier emphasis on strategic planning than is currently in vogue – particularly on the financial aspects of strategic planning.

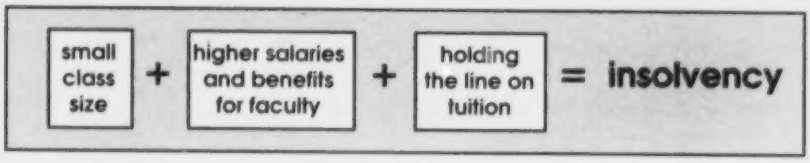
- Many schools have developed aggressive, sophisticated annual giving programs and experienced sharp percentage increases in annual giving campaign totals. This steep gradient cannot be sustained indefinitely, and, in some schools, has already become flat.
- Many schools have relied upon auxiliary services, particularly summer programs and extended day programs, as vehicles to supplement tuition/fee income levels. While fewer examples are at hand of these having "peaked," these services will eventually reach a saturation level as well.
- Many schools have seized (at least theoretically) upon the idea of endowment as "the answer" to keeping tuitions at manageable levels and, thus, the answer to keeping their schools affofdable for current families. But shallow interest rate gradients in recent years, coupled with competition from successful major fund-raising campaigns that have endowment as a major target, argue against this as a practical solution of significance.
- In recent years, many schools have experienced sharp percentage increases in unfunded tuition aid. Its gradient, too, cannot be sustained indefinitely and, as with annual giving, has already either flattened or become officially "frozen" (capped by board and/or administrative action).
- Funding depreciation in physical plant, particularly under recent FASB regulations,[1] can be expected to increase the percentage of operating expense allocated to plant maintenance (certainly from an accounting standpoint and probably from a cash standpoint).
- While purchase and installation of computers and related non-personnel expenses are often considered capital expenses (as they should be), the resulting operating expenses can be expected to continue to mount as a percentage of overall budget. When coupled with direct personnel expenses for maintenance of networks and systems, and for instructional costs specific to these systems, some schools have already reached or exceeded a figure of 10% of total operating budget allocated to computer systems and associated (personnel and other) costs.

Financial Equilibrium Principles

On the one hand, schools have full classrooms and waiting pools. On the other, they are experiencing "tapped out" alternate revenue sources coupled with difficult to control expenses. In the face of this mixed picture, two sets of principles rise to positions of even greater importance than they have historically held. The first set includes the following principles.

- Operating budgets must be brought under control without relying on increased enrollments, increased annual giving, and increased auxiliary services.
- Your school's balanced budget must include appropriately funded allocations for depreciation, for renewal and replacement of physical assets, and for professional growth and development of "people assets." Not one of these constitutes a legitimate area in which to "save" money.
- Your school's balanced budget must realistically address the basic, three-part operations funding equation. Schools tend to "wish" for low class sizes and strong faculty compensation packages in combination with low tuitions. This combination sums to insolvency and cannot be maintained over time (see the figure on the next page).

At least one of those "wishes" must be relinquished to yield larger-than-ideal class sizes, weaker-than-ideal faculty compensation packages, and/or higher-than-ideal tuition levels. A useful strategic plan should firmly and forthrightly establish board-level



prioritization among these three necessarily competing elements. (As ISM has consistently noted, acceptance of the second of these – a weaker-than-ideal faculty compensation package – is likely, over time, to yield a faculty that delivers weaker-than-ideal academic quality.)

Once the operations budget is solidly balanced – i.e., in equilibrium – your strategic plan's financial and other components must doggedly honor that equilibrium and must maintain that equilibrium over time. As Hopkins, Massy, and others have noted, "The idea behind long-run financial equilibrium is simply that in addition to having the budget in balance in a given year, the aggregate growth rates of income and expense should be equal" or income should exceed expense.[2]

This yields the second set of principles.

- Any planning action that increases operating expenses requires a corresponding action to increase operating revenues.
- Any circumstance that decreases operating revenues requires a corresponding decrease in operating expenses.
- Any planning action that brings a one-time, non-operating expense (e.g., construction, adaption, equipment) requires support from non-operating revenues (i.e., capital campaigns, major gifts programs). Schools that borrow to support one-time, non-operating expenses must decide whether debt service is an operating or non-operating expense and allocate accordingly.

Controllable/uncontrollable Variables

Discussion in finance meetings often turns to the subject of "controlling expenses" or "maximizing revenues," but these phrases are, in private school finance, simplistic. Most finance factors represent a mixture of controllable and uncontrollable variables, as demonstrated at the beginning of this article. Take a closer look at the controllable/uncontrollable aspects of annual giving, tuition aid, auxiliary services, endowment, and depreciation.

Annual giving production is a function of a school's budget-balancing policies,[3] of the overall development excellence and organizational effort, and of what might be termed "super-discretionary" income in the targeted families.

If "discretionary" income in the private school context refers to a sort of family "profit margin" from which tuition dollars can be drawn, then "super-discretionary" income represents those funds that are available after the first layer of discretionary income has been spent.

The flattening of annual giving curves in recent years[4] is a result of schools having successfully enhanced development excellence and effort. This accomplishment produced a sharply upward revenue gradient for some time, coupled with a consequent "using up" of the super-discretionary pool of dollars. Two factors contributed to this draining of the super-discretionary pool: annual giving programs' success in tapping that pool, and the national explosion in private philanthropic activity (which was probably caused in part by declines in both corporate and government philanthropic activity).

The largely controllable aspects of this flattening, then, include budget-balancing policies and overall development excellence and organizational effort. Once the annual giving organization is both mature and superb, the annual giving revenue gradient may become "uncontrollable" (as far as the gradient's upward continuance is concerned). It thereby becomes flat[5] for reasons unrelated to anything the school has done or can do.

The percentage of a school's budget allocated to unfunded tuition aid cannot sustain a steady upward gradient indefinitely, either. Even in schools in which socioeconomic diversity (as distinct from socioethnic and/or sociocultural diversity) is paramount in the mission statement, a flattening of the gradient (in percent-of-operating-expenses terms) is inevitable. While the choice of making socioeconomic diversity a priority – first in the mission statement and then in the operating budget – is certainly controllable, the flattening of the eventual percent-of-operating gradient is not controllable if your school is to remain solvent.

Auxiliary services income is theoretically controllable indefinitely, unlike the previous two items. There is no inherent and necessary limit on an upward revenue gradient in this area, whether expressed in actual dollars or as a percentage of overall operating budget.

In practical terms, however, limits soon appear. If, for example, your school decides to restrict its extended day program to the school's own students, then expansion of that program beyond a certain point is not realistic. Yet, even if your school decides against such a limitation, constraints still inevitably come into play in regard both to staffing levels and the capacities of your facilities and/or the property on which your facilities rest.

It is unrealistic to expect auxiliary services to provide indefinite increases in percent-revenue levels – unless your school is willing to build these programs to the point where they surpass the size of the overall school operation.

The controllable aspects of endowment include the excellence and organizational priority placed upon a deferred giving program, coupled with skilled management of the principal (investment management).

Less-controllable aspects include the maturity of the deferred giving program, including the overall health and the specific areas of growth within the national and global economies, and federal treatment of appreciated assets for tax purposes. Current parents, looking ahead to college and retirement costs, may not be interested in giving part of their assets to your endowment fund.

Whereas depreciation and renewal of facilities were once controllable expenses in the sense that they could be deferred indefinitely (on paper), this is no longer the case. While schools may still choose whether to fund depreciation in their facilities, the reporting of

depreciation in an audit is now required. The aging of facilities is uncontrollable; to provide prudent management of physical assets, you must consistently fund yearly renewal and replacement costs from operations and set aside funds that will pay for replacement at the end of a system's life cycle. Renewal/replacement demands can be expected to statistically increase the percentage of operating expense allocated by schools to their physical facilities.

Operations dollars expended on computer technology and its associated (personnel and other) costs are controllable. Here, at least, is one expense-growth area in which the concept of "controlling expenses" relates to real finance.

Despite its seeming controllability, however, this expense category, like the preceding revenue-and-expense items, looms as a formidable difficulty. Computer-related expense comprises an area in which mission and marketing often collide. Technology and computer-assisted instruction clearly enhance virtually any school's academic mission. However, because of perceived external pressures – both from competing schools and from the school's own parent body – a school's leaders may reach a point where they feel pressured to upgrade hardware and software beyond the point where the equipment substantially supplements academic programs. Even with the cost of technology coming down each year, it will be difficult to control the demand for new applications and advanced hardware.

And, because issues of competition and marketing bear on solvency (i.e., on the school's perceived quality and its ability to prepare students for the future, and, consequently, on its retention capability and its perceived philanthropic worthiness), "mission" often yields to "marketing." Thus, a theoretically controllable expense becomes less so in practice.

There are other operations budget components or influences that are basically not controllable. They include the amount of discretionary and/or "super-discretionary" income in school families, increases in the costs of fringe benefits paid to faculty/staff as part of overall compensation packages, the amount of interest earned on cash reserves or on endowment funds, and, of course, inflation itself.

Summary

This complex mixture of controllable, quasi-controllable, and uncontrollable school finance variables combines to make strategic financial planning a matter of overriding importance to private-independent school boards and management teams. Right now, while the school finance picture is strong, operations budgets must be brought into an honest equilibrium (see, again, the first set of principles listed in the section titled *Financial Equilibrium Principles*). Once that honest equilibrium is established, the second set of principles must be observed scrupulously. ■

Notes

[1] See "Prepare for the FASB Accounting Changes," I&P, 19-9-35.

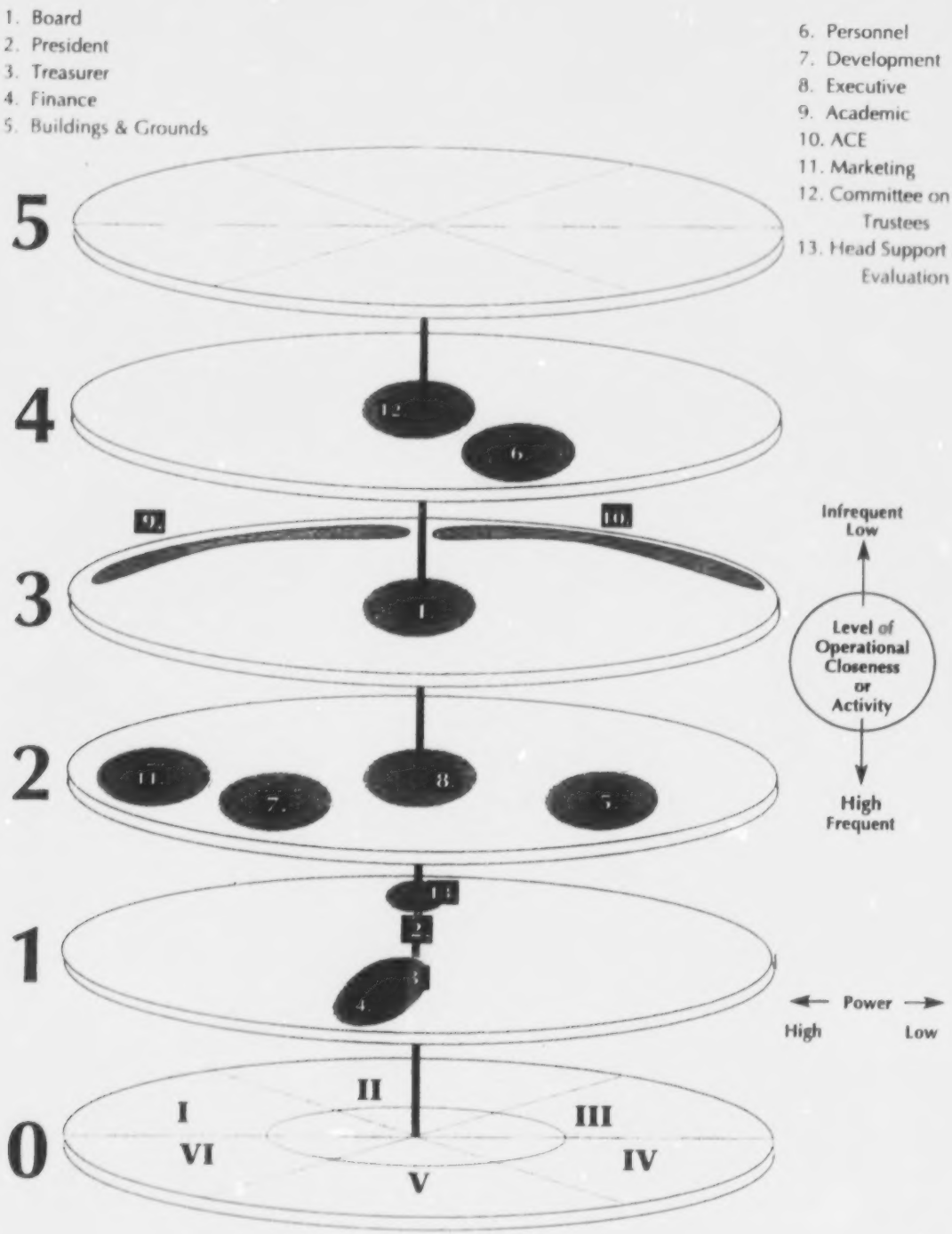
[2] Hopkins, D.S.P. and Massy W.F. *Planning Models for Colleges and Universities*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981, as cited by Aitken, P., and others, in *Access and Affordability* Washington, D.C.: NAIS, 1994, p. 61.

[3] Your policy determines the extent to which operating expenses are covered by tuition/fee income, thereby allowing fund raising to focus on enhancements or conversely, whether annual giving is used to offset the difference between costs and tuition/fees.

[4] See, for example, *NAIS Statistics 1994*, page 100. See "Annual Giving: The New Reality" I&P, 16-12-45.

[5] See *"Annual Giving: The New Reality,"* I&P, 16-12-45.

Charles (Chip) Snowden joined Independent Schools Management in 1993, bringing with him 20 years experience in private-independent school administration. As a consultant at ISM, Chip specializes in conducting Institutional Assessments, Market Analyses, Board Workshops and Administrative Structure Reviews. Chip holds a B.A. from the University of Delaware. In addition, he has studied educational administration and leadership at the University of South Alabama, East Carolina University (NC), and Texas Christian University.



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Action-oriented Agenda Keeps Board Meetings Moving

Charles Snowden, Jr., ISM

Are you eagerly looking forward to your next board meeting? No? Perhaps that's because you've come to expect a "typical" session, one characterized by:

- Lengthy discussions, often focusing upon minutiae or items of special interest to just one or two members;
- a detailed report by the Head on school activities since the last board meeting;
- inability to deal effectively with important issues because members do not have the background information they need;
- poor attendance...at times not even a quorum;
- minimal progress; you can't seem to get action taken or decisions made.

To build a better meeting, start with the agenda. Keep this framework focused on action, and set the stage for a productive session.

A typical Board Agenda

Boards tend to undertake each meeting's work based on the same standard agenda, which encourages the same non-action-focused results. Does your board's agenda resemble Figure 1?

Figure 1 – Typical Agenda

1. Call to order
2. Approval of previous minutes
3. Head of School's report
4. Committee reports:
   a. Education Committee
   b. Personnel Committee
   c. Facilities Committee
   d. Development Committee
   e. Finance Committee
5. Old business
6. New business
7. Adjournment

This approach conveys a minimum of information. There is no indication that anything non-routine in nature will be addressed; no suggestion that any topic should be researched in advance; no estimate of the time commitment to be made, nor of the time allocated to any particular topic.

There is no focal point; even committee chairs with little to report will be expected to say something to fill their spot on the agenda. Members are not led away from any pet issue they may have, so they consequently can be expected to introduce it at the first opportunity.

An enhanced Board Agenda

Board meetings do not have to be that way. They can be exciting events in which board members are fully engaged, focused on significant issues, and oriented toward action. This is possible when board operations are based on the concept that the majority of the board's work will be accomplished on the committee level rather than by the full board.[1]

A strong committee system guided by carefully selected committee chairs does the groundwork – discussion, fact-finding, recommendations. Then, in its meetings, the full board can focus on action.

The "enhanced agenda" (Figure 2, on pg. 12) encourages that action. It *specifies the key topics* to be considered at each meeting, *ranks all agenda items* in terms of urgency and importance on a scale of 1 to 5 (low to high priority), and *sets a time frame*. The ranking, carried out by the board president with the Head's input, trains the board to focus its energy on items that are both important and urgent.

Note that this agenda specifies discussing *only one* in-process committee issue, taking action on *only one* proposal, and limiting the meeting to 2 1/2 hours. Although you may at times have more than two pressing matters to consider, sticking as closely as possible to these parameters helps ensure a productive, upbeat session.

The agenda should be sent to all board members at least four days prior to the scheduled meeting, as part of a packet that also includes a summary report of administrative activity prepared by the School Head, a digest of committee research or other relevant background for anticipated deliberation, and minutes of interim meetings (if any) of the Executive Committee.

A step-by-step look at the enhanced agenda

- ***Head's summary report.*** Since this report on administrative activity will have been sent to board members in advance, with the agenda, 10 minutes should be adequate time for a brief review and a pertinent question or two.
- ***Executive committee minutes.*** Five minutes should be sufficient to review these interim items, if any.
- ***In-process committee issue.*** The purpose of this discussion is to allow a committee chair access to whole-board feedback about some sticking point faced by the committee as it works toward finalization of its proposal.

For example, as the Finance Committee moves toward finalization of its proposed operations budget for the following school year, it may wish to have several minutes of face-to-face input by the whole board on some particular expenditure under consideration, prior to finalizing its draft budget. In another scenario, if the Development Committee is charged with putting together a strategic marketing plan by, say, December 31, it may want an in-process review by the whole board in mid-November.

This kind of board review of committee work is quite different in its purpose from the deadly habit of having every committee routinely summarize its activities, regardless of the nature and stage of development of those activities.

- ***Discussion and action on committee proposal.*** This item is shown on the agenda in boldface and awarded a high rating on importance, urgency, or both, to emphasize to board members that this constitutes the primary reason for having this meeting. Mem-

Figure 2 – Enhanced Agenda

Time	Importance • Urgency (1-5)*		Agenda Item
7:00 p.m.	2	1	Call to order
7:00 p.m.	3	1	Approval of previous minutes
7:05 p.m.	3	1	Review of Head's summary report
7:15 p.m.	3	2	Review of Head's Executive Committee minutes (if any)
7:20 p.m.	4	3	Discussion of one in-process committee issue
7:45 p.m.	4	5	**Discussion and ACTION on one committee proposal**
8:30 p.m.			Break
8:45 p.m.	3	2	Miscellaneous items for brief discussion and referral to appropriate committees
9:25 p.m.	4	2	Action minutes summary
9:30 p.m.	1	1	Adjournment

*1=low priority, 5=high priority

bers, duly alerted, can then be expected to invest significant homework time in preparation. (This material is the "digest of committee research or other relevant background for anticipated deliberation" that is sent in advance with the agenda packet.)

• ***Miscellaneous items*** for brief discussion and referral to appropriate committees. Non-agenda issues raised during this segment of the meeting (the "new business" portion) should almost always be referred immediately to an appropriate committee or placed on the agenda for the next full board meeting. Again, the emphasis is on work in committee. Unless the item has true urgency and must be discussed now by the entire board, it should not be pursued in this meeting.

• ***Summary of action minutes.*** At the close of the meeting, the appropriate board officer reads the action minutes,[2] the short list of items on which action has been taken. This would include consensus approval (or not) of the in-process committee activity discussed earlier in this meeting, the results of the whole-Board vote on the committee action proposal, and the referral to committee or to subsequent whole-board meeting of any non-agenda items introduced in the "miscellaneous" discussion segment of the agenda. ■

Notes

[1] For details on the committee-based approach to board operations, see these *Ideas & Perspectives* articles: "Stages of Board Development," Vol. 16, No. 10, p. 39; "The Annual Agendas," Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 5; and "Forming and Charging the Board Committees," Vol. 19, No. 7, p. 27.

[2] See "Action Minutes Turn Good Intentions into Accomplishments," *To The Point*, Vol. 2, No. 10, p. 57.

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Forming and Charging the Board Committees

Charles Snowden, Jr., ISM

ISM has previously discussed "Stages of Board Development."[1] Boards that are in Stages One (short definition) or Three (petrified), rather than the recommended Stage Two, frequently have difficulty organizing themselves to do effective strategic planning and implementation. This article suggests an annual approach to board committee organization which can move the board rapidly off the operating plane (administration of school operations) toward the strategic, viability-focused, Stage Two components of trusteeship.

I think that boards exist primarily to plan and execute *strategic functions*. Therefore, an effective board is one that develops a strong planning structure for your school.

ISM's recommended annual planning and agenda-setting cycle[2] implies that the board's Executive Committee and the Head should, at this time of year, thoughtfully re-examine the existing board committee structure. That structure should be determined by the implications of the school's planning document, and by the annual spring updating of that document, and by the document's resulting school, board, and administration agendas for the upcoming school year.

The Board Committee Line-up

Having revisited the planning document and set the next year's agendas, the Executive Committee and the Head will find, in most cases, there is a need to continue at least four committees (besides the Executive Committee itself): the Finance Committee, the Development Committee, the Head Evaluation Committee, and the Committee on Trustees.[3] The successful execution of any realistic annual board agenda will require excellence in each of those areas.

My own view is that the existence of other commonly found board committees may or may not be implied by a given set of annual agendas.[4] Such frequently used committees as Education, Student Programs, Personnel, Marketing and Community/Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Long-range (or Strategic) Planning, Buildings and Grounds, Admissions/Enrollment Management, and others, may have no *board-appropriate role to play*, particularly with Stage One or Stage Three boards.

If boards exist primarily to plan and execute strategic functions, the yearly committee formation-and-charge process becomes clear. For example, if no "strategic functions" are implied for the Education Committee by a given set of annual agendas, then no Education Committee need be formed for that year. It may be termed "dormant," or it may simply be eliminated by the Executive Committee until a board-appropriate role appears for it in the future.

An example of such a role might be the execution of a preliminary study for an electronics-assisted instruction system for the school's medium-range future. Consistent with the committee's responsibilities in the areas of the school's future educational requirements and long-term marketability, such a charge would grow out of an item in the school's planning document calling for the possible installation of such a system four to eight years into the future. The Education Committee would be "re-formed" and charged to conduct its study over an 18-month period, then turn its findings over to the Executive Committee and Head. The Head and the faculty would then develop and pursue the concept, based on those findings.

I recommend that the Executive Committee and the Head ask this question as they consider the implications of their annual agendas for board structure in the coming year: "Does each item in the annual agendas require *board-level oversight and/or participation* in order to be successfully addressed?" If the board and Head have adopted ISM's recommended Head-evaluation system,[5] the answer will often be no.

Oversight and participation will, instead, be conducted in the next year and every year by the board's Head Evaluation Committee, not by a plethora of board committees each charged with oversight of a specific component of the administration's own agenda. This, especially with a Stage One or Stage Three board, is a poor use of board talent, is usually inefficient, and is occasionally even dysfunctional. The board's role, and that of its committees, should remain strategic.

Conceived in this way, the distinction between standing committees and ad hoc committees may become irrelevant. All committees should be ad hoc in the sense that they are annually commissioned to carry out that particular year's planning-document-inspired strategic functions. If no such strategic functions are envisioned in a given year for a particular committee, then that committee does not function (something which often happens de facto in any case).

(As discussed in a previous issue,[6] the Head Evaluation Committee may generate a charge for a committee when special data-collection tasks are required. Such a request would be made through the Executive Committee.)

As for the kind of operations-related activity common among some committees – e.g., organizing and conducting an annual auction or bake sale, driving sports teams or cheerleaders to away games – this kind of marvelously helpful activity comes under the proper purview of several parent committees within a parent organization. These activities are not strategic; they are "merely" helpful and important. If executed by the board committees, they become confusing to a board which is trying to organize and structure itself to "do the trusteeship."

Charging the Committees

Each July, once the board committee structure for the next school year has been decided, the Executive Committee and Head use the annual agendas to develop the charge for each committee.[7] As part of this process, the new charges should be compared with any charges from the previous year. This emphasizes that this year's charges are derived from this year's planning document stipulations, and that those stipulations change, year-to-year.

Sample charges to a Board Finance Committee

- "Using the concept of a multi-year,

percentage-based display of major line item expenses,[8] project a graduated set of percentage changes designed to strengthen the annual operating budget's capacity to express the school's instructional mission, using the stipulations and assumptions implicit in the master planning document." *Proposal due to board: October 15.*

- "Using the planning document's strategic projections for the next school year, respond to, and assist as needed, the administration in its development of the operating budget for the school year beginning 13 months from now. Give formal endorsement and approval of the final draft prior to its submission to the board." *Proposal due to board: December 1.*

Sample charges to a Committee on Trustees

- "Using the planning document's four-to-six-year major gifts campaign[9] projections, reformulate the board profile[10] and submit to the board a master cultivation plan/schedule for the potential trustees who collectively will provide the strongest arrangement and greatest balance of strengths (by virtue of their fund-raising experience, their access to affluence, and/or their own affluence). Include in the cultivation plan/schedule both timetables and individual responsibilities." *Proposal due to board: October 1.*
- "Following the development of the above cultivation plan/schedule, prepare a revision of the August new trustee orientation process so that preparation for and conduct of major gifts campaigns become central themes in the orientation sessions." *Proposal due to board: March 1.*
- "Upon the Board Development Committee's completion of its proposed major gifts campaign projections, meet with that committee to discuss implications of the case statement for the board profile and the new trustee cultivation plan/schedule." *Meeting to be held at completion of development of the case statement; meeting initiated by Development Committee.*

Sample Charges to Board Development Committee

- "Using the planning document's four-to-six-year major gifts campaign projections, and with the assistance of the Head, the Development Officer, and the major gifts campaign consultant provided for in the operating budget, develop a proposed case statement for the campaign. Include recommendations and a suggested timeline for further decisions on the details eventually to be included in the case statement document(s)." *Proposal due to board: May 1.*
- "Upon completion of the case statement proposal, meet with the Committee on Trustees to discuss implications for the board profile and the new trustee cultivation plan/schedule." *Meeting with Committee on Trustees: immediately upon completion of case statement proposal.*

These sample board committee charges have in common: a tight relationship to the school's planning document (and, thereby, to the annual agendas); a focus which is clearly strategic; and timelines which are mutually supportive. ■

Notes

[1] See "Stages of Board Development," *I&P*, 16-10-39. See also ISM's 1992 book, *How to Put Your Board Together in Ways That Make Sense: The ISM Trustee Guidebook*, Chapter Four, "Organizing for Success."

[2] See "Head Evaluation, Linking Mission, Planning, and Success," *I&P*, 18-18-15, entire issue; "Strategic Planning: the Foundation Process," 18-16-61; and "The Annual Agendas," 19-2-5.

[3] For more on these committees, see: "Finance Committee," *I&P*, 18-8-32; "Development Committee," 17-10-37; "Head Evaluation Committee," 18-15-57, entire issue; "Committee on Trustees," 13-13-49.

[4] Your bylaws may specify six to eight committees. This article suggests bylaw language which is permissive in that regard, rather than prescriptive.

[5] See again *I&P*, 18-15, entire issue.

[6] See *I&P*, 18-15, entire issue.

[7] See *I&P*, 19-2-5.

[8] See "Budget as Philosophy," *I&P*, 18-8-29.

[9] "Major gifts," in ISM's usage, refers to all types of fund-raising projects in which large gifts will be sought, including capital campaigns, endowment drives, and other non-annual efforts.

[10] See again "Stages of Board Development," *I&P*, 16-10-39. See also *The ISM Trustee Guidebook*, Chapter Four, "Organizing for Success."

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The Annual Agendas

Charles Snowden, Jr., ISM

ISM recently published a reformation of its recommended Head-Evaluation process in Ideas & Perspectives.[1] *The new process links a school's mission and its (resulting) planning documents with the three key "agendas": the annual school agenda, the annual board agenda, and the annual school administration implementation agenda.*

Spring is the time to review the school's planning document(s) in preparation for the agenda-setting tasks of summer.[2] It is vital for the board and Head to focus attention on school mission and planning now, before setting the annual agendas, to provide the foundation for successful operations throughout the coming year.

Annual School Agenda

The Executive Committee and the Head, having revisited the school's mission statement and planning documents, construct an annual agenda designed to move the strategic or long-range plan forward on a schedule.

Most planning documents show a high degree of specificity in their first year or two, becoming increasingly abstract as they project the long-term future.

- Typical planning document language in first year of plan: "Revise the approach to middle school community service programs to provide more meaningful, mission-explicit, in-depth experiences for our students and for the individuals and community agencies that host the experiences."
- Typical planning document language in fifth year of plan: "Review the effectiveness of the middle school's character development efforts."

During the first and second years of typical planning documents, many items are relatively concrete. As a result, the annual school agenda may use language identical to that of the planning document. In that case, the Executive Committee and the Head should proceed on the other two agendas: the annual board agenda and the annual administration implementation agenda.

As the planning document extends into the future and items become increasingly abstract, it is the job of the annual school agenda to "concretize" them. Based on the previous example, setting a "review of the effectiveness of the middle school's character development efforts" for the plan's fifth year, the Executive Committee and the Head might develop from that charge the following items.

- Survey upper school students and their parents regarding the effectiveness of the curricular and co-curricular character development programs that were part of their experience in middle school.
- Visit at least five other middle schools with strong character development programs.
- Arrange at least one middle school teacher in-service program exploring character development themes.
- Discuss with middle school faculty the redesign of their teacher-evaluation system to include character development themes.

The annual school agenda, then, lists action items that may be taken verbatim from the school's planning document's more abstract language.

Annual Board Agenda

Having developed the annual school agenda, the Executive Committee, with the Head's participation, then develops the annual board agenda. This agenda details the board's action month-by-month and then serves as the Executive Committee's own oversight agenda for the year. A partial-year example follows.

July

1. Review the committee structure of the board in view of the annual school agenda's (and in view of the strategic plan's or long-range plan's) requirements of the board for the next year; decide whether to retain the same committee/sub-committee structure; determine the number of trustees and non-trustees needed for each committee to further the annual school agenda at the board level; and select appropriate individuals to chair or co-chair each committee. *Responsibility: Executive Committee.*
2. Develop the charge for each committee for the next year in light of the annual school agenda; compare the new charges with last year's to emphasize the differences in the implications of this year's annual school agenda for each committee. *Responsibility: Executive Committee.*
3. Review the annual August orientation process for new trustees in light of this year's annual school agenda. Alter the content of the orientations to emphasize the fact that, while certain trustee characteristics and behaviors are consistent, year after year, others are determined by the annual school agenda and its new set of implications. *Responsibility: Committee on Trustees.*

August

1. Execute the committee assignments and charges, as determined in the July sessions. (Here the board agenda would list both the assignments and the charges.) *Responsibility: Committee on Trustees.*
2. Execute the new trustee orientation program, as determined in the July sessions. (Here the board agenda would provide an overview of the orientation program, its goals, and its components.) *Responsibility: Committee on Trustees.*
3. Receive the Head Evaluation Committee's newly developed document, which details the Head's major and routine objectives for the coming 10 months. Ratify the document, adding or revising committee charges as necessary.[3] *Responsibility: Executive Committee.*

September

1. Review and evaluate the new trustee orientation process. *Responsibility: Committee on Trustees.*
2. Review the first draft of the next year's enrollment projection document, and respond to the administration. *Responsibility: Finance Committee and Admission Committee.*

October

1. Review the first draft of next year's operating budget. Respond to the administration. *Responsibility: Finance Committee.*
2. Review tentative personnel change projections for next year. Respond to the administration. *Responsibility: Personnel Committee and Finance Committee.*
3. Review first round of Head Evaluation Committee in-process feedback (data gathered from head evaluation process). *Responsibility: Executive Committee.*

This partial calendar listing of annual board agenda items emphasizes the relationship between the board agenda and the school's strategic plan or long-range plan. The annual school agenda serves as the bridge between the planning document and the board agenda.

Annual Administration Implementation Agenda

Like the annual board agenda, this is a month-by-month listing of action items. The administration implementation agenda specifies the administration's role in furthering the annual school agenda (and, thereby, the school's planning document). Examples follow.

July

1. Review the structure and function of the management team in view of the annual school agenda's (and, thus, in view of the strategic plan's or long-range plan's) requirements on the administration for the next 12 months; decide whether to retain previously developed structural relationships, job descriptions, and task force structures. *Responsibility: Head of School.*
2. Develop specific goals and objectives with the management team for the next 12 months. Further develop these documents into evaluation instruments similar to the Head-evaluation system used by the board's Head Evaluation Committee.[4] *Responsibility: Head of School.*

August

1. Finalize the revised Parent Education Plan,[5] as called for in the annual school agenda (following the strategic plan's charge to enhance rapport with parent body). *Responsibility: Division Heads.*
2. Finalize the newly developed faculty professional development and renewal program, as called for in the annual school agenda (following the strategic plan's charge to reduce faculty attrition and enhance faculty morale). *Responsibility: Division Heads.*

September

1. Develop the first draft of next year's enrollment projections. The first draft of next year's operating budget, developed in October, will be based on these figures. *Responsibility: Admission Director.*
2. Initiate the new Parent Education Plan. *Responsibility: Division Heads and Development Director.*
3. Initiate the new faculty professional development and renewal program. *Responsibility: Division Heads.*

October

1. Examine the strategic plan's personnel implications for next year and develop tentative personnel change projections. *Responsibility: Head of School.*
2. Develop the first draft of next year's operating budget. *Responsibility: Head and Business Manager.*

The annual administration implementation agenda progresses parallel to the annual board agenda.[6] Each advances the strategic or long-range plan as expressed in the annual school agenda. Using this approach, the school remains mission-focused and proactive to reach ideal levels in all board and school operations. ■

Notes

[1] See "Head Evaluation: Linking Mission, Planning, and Success," *I&P*, Vol. 18, No. 15, entire issue.

[2] See "Head Evaluation: An Annual Timetable," *I&P*, Vol. 18, No. 15, p.57.

[3] *I&P*, Vol. 18, No. 15, p. 58.

[4] *I&P*, Vol. 18, No. 15, p. 57.

[5] For more on PEP's, see "Community-building Management with Your Parent Body," *I&P*, Vol. 16, No. 8, p. 30.

[6] *I&P*, Vol. 18, No. 15, p. 59, chart.

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18

The Intimacy of Responsibility

Renilde Montessori

Both words – "intimacy" and "responsibility" – are open to multiple and perhaps controversial interpretations.

Within our context, intimacy is the antithesis of prejudice and its attendant demons – segregation and isolation. Intimacy is akin to deep-rooted, congenial familiarity, the highest form of companionableness; it is the delight inherent in the knowledge of equal worth, not only with a few choice humans and their achievements, not only with our immediate environment, natural or man-made; in its farthest reaches, it is the knowledge of complicity with our universe and its untold number of splendid, magnificent phenomena.

Since its inception, our species has pursued the knowledge and understanding of these phenomena powered by fascination, or by obsessive tenacity, or by awe, reverence and wonder; fundamentally, by the urge to learn, which is perhaps the strongest of all human drives.

And so, over millions of years, we have accumulated quite a bit of knowledge and some understanding of the workings of ourselves, our earth, our universe. Being a young and credulous species, we are inordinately pleased with ourselves and our little hoard of knowledge, tending to forget that what we know is infinitesimal. A cosmic sage may look down on us and chortle when the peacocks among us proclaim that we now have unraveled the secrets of life.

We also tend to forget that our knowledge is more often put to use for evil purposes than for a greater good under the régime of those who indulge in the travesty of leadership that is the pursuit of power.

Paradoxically, although we are indeed a young and credulous species, as part of our human condition there is within us an ancient core of wisdom, the wisdom from which we draw the awareness of our intimacy with life and all its matters, with our habitat and all its furnishings, living and non-living.

We have not yet learned to seek out and heed this awareness, either in ourselves, the adults, where it has become occasional, or in the children in whom, though still inchoate, it will shine with constant, luminous splendour until it is caused to dim and become feeble through the inadvertency of those who call them to life.

In our hasty, Red Queen style of living so many of us have mislaid the intimacies of existence, of which the most important is the intimacy between parents and their children, between educators and the young humans in their charge; for if this is not the place, no other can germinate and flourish to permeate the essence of their existence.

There is a saying – "Those who hear not the music think the dancer mad." A provocative statement, which acquires reality when, while enjoying a ballet, we click on the mute button of our remote control. The movements of the dancers on the screen become suddenly absurd. Our intimate response to more or less glorious music interpreted by more or less expressive bodies is rudely severed and falls into a dreary little limbo.

Responsibility, within our context, means the ability to respond usefully and with intelligence, therefore implies intimate knowledge of the matters requiring a response. Unless we hear the music, the danger threatens that we may think the dancers mad.

Responsibility cannot be assumed by anyone who has not intimate knowledge of, for instance, a person, or a group of people; of animals or plants; of a situation, a business, an association, a society, an organisation, a project, or a country, any of which at a given time may call for care, guidance, leadership or representation.

So, supposing all of the above is true, how do we teach our children to acquire intimate knowledge of all of life's matters? How do we teach them to become responsible?

We don't.

Neither intimacy nor responsibility can be taught, not by parents, not by teachers, not by professors, or religious leaders, or any other expert in human instruction. The pursuit of intimacy and responsibility is an inherent characteristic that can either be helped and encouraged to develop, or discouraged, warped, and even totally obliterated by those who hear not the music of the child's existential enthusiasm.

To help and encourage the child's quest for humanity is a blithe task, making demands on ancient memories culled long before the ability to remember was in place. It also makes demands on a change of pace and rhythm. Familiarity, friendship, intimacy – these are plants of slow and steady growth, thriving only when there is a sense of endless time, not a splintered continuity where moments of togetherness become, in their immediacy, sharp as shards of broken glass.

It takes time, and attention, and joyful participation of all members, each at their own level of adequacy, to weave the rich tapestry of reciprocal responsibility.

When a child is born his first spiritual habitat is the ambience of intimacy with his mother within the confines of a family. All being well, the child is a source of wonder and delight to the mother, the father and the family. In the absence of a family , a circumstance increasingly prevalent, he should at least be a source of wonder and delight to the mother and father because then his first task is fulfilled – to bring joy to those who called him to life.

If this joy is unconditional, the parents will wish their child, from the beginning and throughout his childhood, to be implicated in their daily doings. They will, companionably, present his world to him as a hospitable place, filled with an infinite variety of interesting ventures and adventures. Within safe confines, they will allow him the freedom and opportunity to observe, explore and investigate; to move about – first creeping, then crawling, then walking and running, indoors and outdoors; and, as his abilities increase, they will invite him to participate in all activities within his capabilities.

This is how the child will attain lasting intimacy with his environment and all within it, establishing a source of perennial contentment with love of life as the *leitmotif* of his existence.

Maria Montessori, in one of her

most frequently quoted chapters in *The Secret of Childhood – The Intelligence of Love*, writes:

"Is it not a characteristic of love, that sensibility that enables a child to see what others do not see? That collects details that others do not perceive, and appreciates special qualities, which are, as it were, hidden and which only love can discover? It is because the child's intelligence assimilates by loving, and not just indifferently, that he can see the invisible. This active, ardent, meticulous, constant absorption in love is characteristic of children.

"To the adult it appears as liveliness and joy, as intensity of life; these are recognised as infant characteristics. But there has been no recognition of the love behind them, that is to say, the spiritual energy, the moral beauty that accompanies creation.

"The child's love is still pure of contrasts. He loves because he takes, because nature orders him to do so. And what he takes he absorbs to make it a part of his own life, so as to create his own being."

As a natural consequence of his profound love for his environment, the early years are also the time when the habit of assuming responsibility takes root and becomes part of a child's being. If it does not happen then, the sense of responsibility will not develop as a natural phenomenon. Indeed, it may be aberrant, inducing the individual to strive for power; or it may metamorphose to become a devastating life-sentence complete with the ball-and-chain of obligations eternally imposed, by the self, or by others.

If the foundations of intimacy and responsibility are laid within the family environment, these come to fruition and acquire a new dimension when the child, at approximately three years of age, leaves home to join a children's community. Since this is a Montessori conference, we might as well take a Montessori Children's House as the platform for our discourse.

The *Casa dei Bambini* is a prime example of an environment prepared for children in useful and intelligent response to their developmental exigencies for the very good reason that Maria Montessori, eminent scientist that she was, took her lead from the children themselves.

Her prime directive to educators to "follow the child," simple as it is, has often been grievously misinterpreted, misunderstood and misapplied. When it has been put into practice, whether in the family, in Montessori prepared environments or by educators in other contexts, observers have been, and continue to be, amazed.

It is in the *Casa dei Bambini* that Maria Montessori observed the extraordinary phenomenon of the birth of an organised, interdependent, responsible society occurring spontaneously in environments of children three to six years of age.

In *The Absorbent Mind* she writes:

"Social integration has occurred when the individual identifies himself with the group to which he belongs. When this has happened, the individual thinks more about the success of his group than his own personal success."

An example may be given of a human society not lacking in this integration. It is the society of little children who are guided by the magical powers of nature. We must value it and treasure it, because neither character nor the social sentiment can be given by teachers. They are products of life.

But we must not confuse this natural social solidarity with the organisation of adult society which governs man's destinies. It is simply the last phase of children's unfolding, the almost divine and mysterious creation of a social embryo.

In the *Casa dei Bambini*, within explicit, clearly delineated parameters, the children acquire a sense of solidarity with each other and with the adults in charge; they also assume responsibility for the entire physical environment, keeping it clean, orderly and beautiful. They assume responsibility for each other – helping, teaching, comforting and trusting. Every activity in the environment has a clear, intelligible purpose, so that the search for meaning becomes a habit of the intelligence. Control of error inherent in the materials, and prevalent in the environment as a whole, makes it possible for the children to develop a highly sophisticated degree of physical and intellectual independence. As they become independent in body, mind and spirit, they create a lasting bulwark of emotional hardiness.

Through work with the Montessori autodidactic materials they gain familiarity and ease with the abstract concepts these embody, for working with the materials gives them the opportunity to replicate individually a process of abstraction undertaken by mankind over thousands of years. Their language becomes rich, lyrical, scientific and precise.

The children's innate love of the environment is heightened, enhanced and given depth. It becomes perennial, and universal. It translates into awareness of all aspects and characteristics of their physical world, of its non-human inhabitants, and of the past and present achievements of its own versatile, playful, erratic kind.

At the beginning of life, the greatest gift educators can give the children in their charge is to assist them, vigorously and wisely, in their quest for intimacy and familiarity with all matters pertaining to their existence.

The premise is simple – if their love of the environment is ineradicably rooted and remains a vital given in their human condition, they will assume enlightened responsibility for the future of the lovely earth that brought them forth.

The premise may be simple. However, to propose it verges on the ridiculous. It will continue to be perceived as laughably naïve until such a time as we become willing and adequate to follow the child. And then? Ah – that is a story for another day. ■

Renilde Montessori is Maria Montessori's youngest grandchild. She lived and traveled with her grandmother as a child. She attended Montessori schools and finished her secondary studies in the Montessori Lyceum of Amsterdam. In 1968 she joined the Montessori movement, first as a personal assistant to her father, Mario Montessori. She obtained her primary Montessori diploma from the Washington Montessori Institute in 1971 and has since been lecturer, trainer, and AMI examiner. From 1989 to 1995 she was Director of Training at The Foundation for Montessori Education in Toronto. In September of 1995 she became the General Secretary of AMI and now serves as it's President.

Freedom and Responsibility

Margaret E. Stephenson

I would like to reflect upon freedom and responsibility as privileges granted only to human beings in the created universe. As privileges, they are to be cherished, not to be thought lightly of, but valued highly. As privileges, we hold them in thrall for future generations. As gifts to human beings, they have to be considered in the "aid to life" which Dr. Maria Montessori advocated for the construction of man.

Dr. Maria Montessori never forgot the key figure who was the object and the subject of her educational principles and practice. That figure is the human being, who came late in time onto the stage-set of the universe. But though he came late into the drama of the cosmos, he came uniquely gifted. He was endowed with two special gifts, which were his alone, among the inhabitants of earth, and which set him apart from animals and plants. These gifts were intellect and will, or in other words, reason and love. It is these gifts that carry with them freedom and responsibility. Because these gifts of intellect and will are attributes of the human being, they are matter for education. And therefore they belong in Montessori education. Dr. Montessori sets out her programme in her book *"To Educate the Human Potential"* "...not in the service of any political or social creed should the teacher work, but in the service of the complete human being, able to exercise in freedom a self-disciplined will and judgement, unhampered by prejudice and undistorted by fear." (p. 3)

I have found no clearer or more significant description of the role of intelligence and will than in Robert Brennan, O.P.'s book *"The Image of His Maker."* Brennan writes, "No other creature in the visible universe can boast of the gift of intelligence. No other creature has insight or pure thought or a plan for its future. No other creature has the knowledge that can make it free of the limitations of matter. No other creature can choose what it shall or shall not do. No other creature is able to take its powers and actions in hand, so to speak, and make an immortal destiny out of them. For no other creature has reason . . . But if his nature has been enriched with the faculty of understanding, it also has been given a burden that no other earthly creature is required to bear . . . From the moment that reason dawns, he must assume the responsibilities of a human way of life." (p. 188)

Jean Mouroux in his book *The Meaning of Man*, writes, "The first problem that arises is that of the meaning and purpose of our freedom. It is not given us for its own sake, or for any end we please, but quite definitely that we may realise ourselves. There we have a starting point to which every reflecting man will assent. To develop all our capacities and aptitudes, our physical and spiritual powers, to fulfill our human task, and play our part in the world, and thus to construct and create ourselves – to bring ourselves to birth as we would be – that is assuredly man's true greatness and the essence of spiritual liberty. But here we stand at the parting of the ways."

But Mr. Mouroux continues, no less significantly for us in our Montessori work of aiding life.

He writes, "We are faced with the choice – are we going to realise our being in accordance with the dictates of our own will or by responding to our vocation? That is the tragic and the decisive choice that divides mankind into two opposing camps – those who refuse and those who consent to give their allegiance to something higher than themselves – let them name this 'something' as best they can, whether duty or ideal or God.

"For the former, liberty consists in refusing, not indeed all constraints (one can choose one's constraints) but at any rate all obligations; it is a power to realise one's being in strict independence of any transcendent call. For the latter, liberty is found in giving oneself to the service of something greater and better than self, it is a power to realise self by self-dedication to the good and by opening oneself to God. The liberty that refuses is essentially anarchic and destructive, the liberty that gives is essentially committed and constructive. The two are mutually exclusive and mark the deepest line of division between men."

Dr. Montessori's recognition of the child's task to construct a man and of his powers to carry out that task made her significantly aware of the importance of educating the intellect and of training the will. And so she spoke of the need of the child for "liberty in a prepared environment." It is that concept of liberty that carries along with it the factor of responsibility. The child cannot learn to be responsible unless he has freedom to exercise it – he cannot be truly free unless he can learn to be responsible. Dr. Montessori has given the child, from his earliest days in the Children's House, a way of realising his freedom and recognising his responsibility and exercising it.

We mentioned Dr. Montessori's formula of "liberty in a prepared environment." What do we think of when we hear the words "prepared environment?" Do we think of the classroom space of the *Casa dei Bambini*, the Children's House for the three to six-year-olds? Do we imagine the double environment of the elementary children, those from six to twelve years of age, needing the indoor classroom and the facilities outside, of museums, art galleries, libraries, industries, the environment of the working society? Do we think of it in terms of Dr. Montessori's vision for the adolescent, the *Erdkinder*, the earth children? I would like to expand our idea of the prepared environment and to relate it to the universe, the cosmos, and to examine Dr. Montessori's principles and practice in educating for liberty and preparing for responsibility in that immensity of dramatic vision.

For the story of the human being, created with his unique gifts of intellect and will, we find him being placed in a prepared environment – the world within the universe of stars and planets, a world of chemicals, of solids, liquids, gases, which are to form the continents and oceans, of land and water, which are to be furnished and inhabited with plants and animals, with insects, butterflies and bees, with flowers and weeds and crops, with fish and

frogs, with tadpoles and whales. None of these created species, apart from man, had freedom or could exercise responsibility.

The other created species had been given a way of life, the fulfilling of which brought its happiness. They had no choice, they could not change their appointed way of life – the mole could not decide it was tired of living in a tunnel underground and would take to the treetops. The human being can choose where he or she will live, in a hot climate or a cold, in a wet or a dry one. And so it is, with all the aspects of our life.

Dr. Montessori gave the child education to use his liberty aright – within his prepared environment – and she trained the child's will to recognise his responsibility towards the upkeep and conservation of that environment. From the somewhat limited Children's House, to the double environment of classroom and outer society of the elementary children, the environment of man takes on ever expanding dimensions until the adult is exposed to the freedom of the world, through ever widening opportunities of travel. But unless the human being has been trained from his entrance into his own family unit, to value his freedom and to realise his responsibility for using it aright, we have a recipe for disaster.

Human beings have free will, which means they can choose what they shall or shall not do. Unless they are educated as to what they may or may not do, they will have freedom, but may not be responsible.

Unfortunately for society, we live in a climate of pleasing ourselves, of living by emotion not by reason. When emotion, not reason, governs our conduct, we behave irresponsibly. Dom Hubert Van Zeller, O.S.B. has something very wise to say in this regard, "I am what my will is. My will is what I am. I am not my emotions."

But we have a society in which, all too often, feelings predominate. "What do you feel like?" "My feelings are hurt." "I don't feel like doing it." It does not matter what you feel like, if you have a task to do – use your reason to decide whether you should do it or not.

This training to understand freedom as a privilege and responsibility has to be governed by reason, has to begin in the home, and parents have to realise their responsibility. "You <u>can</u> pull the cat's tail, but you <u>may</u> not. And do not brawl because I said <u>NO</u>."

This reminds me of Miranda – not her real name but this is a true story! I was present and heard the discussion while teaching in the school – within the U.S.A.!

One day a woman came to enroll her about 4-year-old in the school. She said, "I must warn you never to say 'no' to Miranda – if anyone says 'no' to her she lies on the floor and has a fit and we're afraid she might die." "Oh," said the headmistress after a short pause. "You'd better take her home – we cannot accept her into the school here." "Why not? We've heard so much about the school – how good it is." "No, we could not take her here – you see, we often say no to children when they behave badly. And if she had a fit, she would just have to die, as none of us would have time to look after her." The mother's eyebrows went up with her hair line – the child's smirk changed to a look of horror. They left. But somehow the child came back and into the school. She was often said 'no' to! She never had a fit – and did not die – and after a while turned into a civilised human being!

The trouble is that society has forgotten the distinction between *can* and *may*. Do parents correct their children when they say, "Can I go out to play?" "Yes you *can*, but you *may* not!"

Do not then make the mistake of going into a long, detailed explanation of why you may not! It is nearly bedtime, it is too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry – it is simply you may not go out to play.

Parents, and adults generally have become so used to giving explanations for their orders that they have lost sight of the fact that they are the responsible authority in the home – responsible so that commands and prohibitions should never be given with any heat, but matter of factly, coldly, with no hint of blame.

The more I reflect upon Dr. Maria Montessori, her observations of the child and his needs and her teachings on the way to help him achieve his own unique potential, the more I come to recognise how contemporary an educator she was, for all time. Her principles and practice are so matter of fact, so simple, so clear and easy to follow, that it makes me very sad when I hear of innovations in the training courses being given, changes to the theory and to the simple presentations of the materials.

Dr. Montessori told us to "give the world to the small child." How absurd that may sound! How can that be done, the world in all its vastness cannot fit into the four walls of the primary classroom? But Dr. Montessori realised that the world was composed of qualities and facts. She incarnated those qualities into the sensorial materials and gave the child the language for the quality. Then she presented the material to the child, showed him how to work with it and left him free to repeat the experience.

How simple! No long description of the material, no long dissertation of what to do; in many cases the material shows you that you have done it wrong, if you have made a mistake.

I wonder if Dr. Montessori had as simple a formula for teaching the child freedom and responsibility?

I believe she had! It is called "the exercises of practical life." This is a group of exercises, with materials, which are presented to the children so that they may learn how to use them, and can repeat the experience of using them. The materials are to do with caring for the environment and the objects within it, caring for the person of the child, so that he may present himself as a member of society, caring for other people and their needs so that one learns how to behave in polite society, learning how to move about so that one does not disturb others and eventually can so control one's movements by one's own will that one can keep entirely still when necessary. These exercises may all be carried out within the freedom of the prepared environment, and the child learns that he may carry out these exercises whenever he wishes to do so, as long as they are sitting in their place on the shelf and not being used by someone else. Freedom – prohibition. Freedom – responsibility – both exercised by material objects, but exercised by a dominant authority.

BUT, the exercises of practical life have an even more significant part to play in preparing the child for the understanding of freedom and its concomitant, responsibility.

The exercises of practical life do not

have a control of error unlike most of the Montessori materials, because the shelf is dusted, even if all the dust has not been removed. What they do have, and this serves as training to responsibility, are "points of interest." Instead of right or wrong performance, we have better and better and best.

By presenting the exercise, by showing how to do it, we are educating the intellect. And what of the will, that other great gift to the human being, and the guardian of responsibility?

"Can you wash the table this time without letting any drops of water fall off this side? I will show you how to do it. Scrub very hard in the middle of the table, now watch – we have to begin to go very carefully, as we get near the edge of the table. Now you have to stop your hand, so that drops of water do not fall over the edge. Now it's your turn – can you do it like that?" Here we have challenged the child, to control, but we have shown him how to control his hand.

Perhaps the first time, or the second, he may have drops falling off the edge. But we repeat the challenge, his performance perfects itself and eventually he has complete control.

Now here is the important point about this training and control of the movement of the hand. It does not really matter, and no great harm is done, if there is water all over when the child is washing a table. But learning to control one's actions does matter, and is going to matter more and more as the child gets older, and he has not learnt to control himself when his hand wants to connect itself to a companion's nose!

The training of the will – the ability to choose the right. The points of interest and the challenge to control and perfection – what a simple prescription for educating to responsibility while realising one's freedom!

This educating of the intellect and the training of the will should begin in the home. If the child then goes to a Montessori school, the education and the training continue in the prepared environment of the Children's House. The child began to learn to care for the environment and for the people within it in the home and then in the Montessori school. He has freedom allowed to him in the prepared environment and he is learning to be responsible.

But what about the elementary child? Has the Montessori elementary classroom need of the exercises of practical life? Yes, and they now have to be carried out within an expanded environment.

The classroom and its furnishings have to be cared for and kept in order, but so has the outside environment of society. There is a behaviour to do with outside libraries, with museums, with art galleries, with parks and gardens, with shops, with industrial workplaces. Each calls for a different code of conduct that has to be followed.

In each of these places are people and the exercises of grace and courtesy, first learnt in the *Casa dei Bambini* and accorded to the child's companions in the Children's House and to any visitors to it, are to be extended to people in libraries, museums, art galleries, shops, anywhere the elementary child goes out to work in or to visit.

But there is an even more significant factor embedded in the exercises of practical life at the elementary and the third plane levels of development. It is nothing to do with Green Peace, with protest marches for the conservation of the countryside with sermons, with whipping up the emotions. It is to do with reason – with the realisation that all within the cosmos are interdependent, to a greater or lesser degree.

It is part of the Exercises of Grace and Courtesy, of the Practical Life Exercises. The child should first have been introduced to the idea in the home environment. It is the idea of service to the community. In the home it takes the form of helping to keep the environment in order for the rest of the family. It may be scraping the carrots for a meal, of dusting the bookshelves, of laying the table, of taking out the garbage – but it is service to others – not for any remuneration but because they are in need of the service and it is part of my responsibility to offer it. "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Yes," should come the answer loud and clear, "because he is in need." Not from the teacher telling to a child does the responsibility come, or pointing it out in words, but from the child being led within the prepared environment to recognise the need of another. "I will polish this silver vase because Mary has brought in a lovely bunch of flowers, and they would look beautiful in this silver vase if it were cleaned up."

The child is free to see the need in the Children's House and if he chooses, he can become responsible for answering that need.

As the child enters the elementary class of the Montessori school and is older, the opportunities for community service increase. All around are examples of people in need. All around in society are the poor, the homeless, the blind, the old. Under adult supervision, the elementary children should become aware of the need of those less well off, and learn how to offer the service they need. Without community service, the children do not become aware of their responsibility to those in need and are not prepared for the next level of service to the community which comes with adolescence and adulthood.

Assuredly there comes a recognition of a need, when pop stars, the media, governments, organised agencies become involved, and large amounts of aid are raised, because our attention has been drawn to a tragedy that has come about or is about to happen. But what about the need of the hidden, the unsung, the lost from sight, the stepped-over in the street – their need is even greater because it is often unrecognised. The need often becomes apparent only to the keenly observant. It is to these needy that we should be directing the attention of the elementary children. It is in this way that we can guide the children to compassion, to a recognition of their responsibility for others in the world whom they do not personally know, but whom they are bound to love, because they are fellow human beings, part of the cosmos, which we all share and inhabit. The gift of will, which in other words means love, has to be exercised if it is not to atrophy. To love means, simply, to will, to choose, the good of the other.

Schools and other educational institutions are aware of the intellect and its need to be developed. Letters after the name have come to be highly regarded. But unless we also recognise that other gift to man, the will, and begin to train it, we are likely to end up with nations of irresponsible citizens, highly academic, but uncontrolled.

In a significant doctoral thesis, Dr. Michael Gross studied Dr. Montessori's "Concept of Personality." He writes: "The reconstruction of a humane society is contingent upon the strength and unification of the human personality, the full elaboration of which depends upon a method of education rooted in the laws of development."

I contend that Dr. Montessori has formulated such a method. In her book, *Education and Peace*, she writes, "The fundamental freedom – the freedom of the individual – is necessary for the evolution of a species for two reasons: 1) it gives individuals infinite possibilities for growth and improvement and constitutes the starting point of man's complete development, 2) it makes the formation of a society possible, for freedom is the basis of human society. (p. 122)...Education today does not take personality into account and does not develop it. Man today pays no heed to human personality and regards human society as a colony without individuals." (p. 124)

Dr. Maria Montessori's "aid to life" (as she called it, deprecating *The Montessori Method*), took each human being in her school as unique and gave them the possibility of realising their freedom in the prepared environment and of being responsible for it.

I think that we have forgotten the points of interest, the ***challenge*** to the human being to remember his gifts of intellect and will, which have to be realised and exercised if the civilisation which has been built up over a thousand years, is not to disintegrate and disappear into anarchy and lawlessness. Give to the intellect – show ***how*** to do – then give to the will – the challenge: "Can you do it like that?" Conduct – behaviour – thought – judgement – the intellectual understanding – then the will, the choice.

Dr. Montessori's message has always been the same to those who study and apply without compromise and innovations her principles and practice. Her message is: "The child is both a hope and a promise for the future." But adults have to realise that the child, along with all human beings, was granted intellect and will, so that he could come to understand and that he was given the freedom of the world, but that he would be held responsible for it. We cannot give "the aid to life" which Dr. Montessori wished us to give unless we allow freedom in a prepared environment and ask for the accompanying responsibility, by training the will to responsible action.

This task belongs to the whole adult population; it is not just the obligation of parents and teachers. But it may very well be the responsibility of Montessorians to educate the outside world to the realisation of the gifts of intellect and will granted uniquely to human beings and what this gift means, in terms of civilisation's survival.

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Margaret E. Stephenson studied with Dr. Maria Montessori for many years and, in 1960, was commissioned by the Montessori family to travel to the United States as a teacher trainer for the Whitby School in Connecticut. In 1962, an AMI training center was opened in Washington, DC, with Margaret Stephenson as its Director of Training. Miss Stephenson was the Director of Training at the Montessori Institute of Milwaukee, Inc. from 1989 to 1995.

The Importance of Freedom in Our World Today

Silvia Dubovoy, Ph.D.

Introduction

It is an honor and a responsibility to have been called upon to address you at the opening of this conference, *Freedom and Responsibility – A Glorious Counterpoint*, and discuss with you the importance of freedom in our world today.

The year 2000 has been proclaimed *The International Year of the Culture of Peace* by the United Nations General Assembly. What better form of celebrating this year than to work together for the free development of the child in a peaceful and constructive environment?

In an address given in Copenhagen on May 22, 1937, Maria Montessori said:

"Education today, in this particular social period, is assuming truly unlimited importance. And the increased emphasis on its practical value can be summed up in one sentence: education is the best weapon for peace."[1]

And in an address given before The European Congress for Peace in Brussels on September 3, 1936, she said:

"Peace is a goal that can be attained only through common accord, and the means to achieve this unity for peace are twofold: first, an immediate effort to resolve conflict without recourse to violence – in other words, to prevent war – and second, a long-term effort to establish a lasting peace among men. Preventing conflicts is the work of politics; establishing peace is the work of education."[2]

There cannot be peace within yourself, your family, the community, countries and the world if there is no freedom; but it is freedom within limits, freedom with responsibility.

During these days, you will hear the word freedom repeated (many times) in each and every lecture and seminar. We trust that through repetition we might all achieve a deeper understanding of these important aspects of the human personality that is constructed during the first six years of life and which are so much needed today.

I have the certainty that all of us who are here, believe that within man a spiritual reality is born, precisely because man is capable of knowing himself and others, and that our principal concern is education.

We have the capacity to become aware and understand our existential situation and the contradictions that exist today in the world. This capacity is mainly what makes us human. We are aware that we need to transform ourselves if we want to help life. However, the understanding of human nature has never been more difficult than in our contemporary society.

We are in the year 2000; we have achieved a mastery of nature undreamed of in the last century. The advancement of science in every aspect or discipline is outstanding; computers are multiplying our knowledge at an accelerated rate. New possibilities are discovered in every field every second. The word *globalization* has set its place on earth.

And still there is a danger in such success. Man may forget the nature of man, the very essence of human development and, distracted with his human power to satisfy his ambitions, it is possible he will ignore the cosmic task that man plays as part of the totality.

For this universe to exist there needs to be a dynamic equilibrium. All elements in the universe are in the process of development. For this development to take place, the attendance and the collaboration of everyone is essential. The emergence of man in the process of evolution, with the awareness of himself, with reasoning powers and imagination, makes him part of nature, subject to laws of development and at the same time possessing the capacity to transcend nature.

The task of human beings is not just to provide for themselves but to understand that we are an essential part in the maintenance of the earth, and therefore the universe, for future generations. There is a responsibility in everything that we do.

Man needs the opportunity to take from the environment what he needs and, at the same time, to be aware that his actions contribute directly or indirectly to the development or destruction of the totality.

Man needs to fulfill his mission in the cosmic order. In order to be able to do it, he needs *to be free to develop individual potentialities*.

Maria Montessori has a view of the universe in its totality. For her, the whole earth with everything that is in it, including man, is part of the cosmic order. There is a discipline that maintains the course of the universe. Human beings are part of that universe and have to follow patterns dictated by laws of nature.

She has a strong faith in the natural impulse of man towards his own growth, towards his complete formation in successive stages of physical and psychological growth. Her vision is towards the child, who she considers has unseen powers that we need to discover through a scientific pedagogy. Montessori says: "Nature gives life by giving freedom and independence, but with it gives laws determined in accordance with time and its special needs. Our first teacher will be the child himself or rather the vital urge of cosmic laws that lead him unconsciously."[3]

Nature has given the child a vital impulse – an inner guide – that directs him towards the full development of his personality. The child has to grow, develop and perfect by himself. Therefore, education has to be a help to life; it must collaborate with the child in the task of constructing himself. To construct himself the child needs an intelligent and loving defense, a prepared environment, with a prepared adult that understands deeply the concept of freedom. Our task is to convey through education the responsibility that man has towards him and the totality.

The aim of this lecture is both theoretical and practical. The keynote will touch the theory, the seminar the practical aspect of the importance of freedom for human development.

What is freedom?

Freedom is used in different meanings, even ambiguously. I'm sure that we all have an intellectual understanding of it. What seems problematic is being able to put into practice such con-

cepts as freedom and responsibility in our daily lives and this is extremely necessary today.

The idea of freedom is as old as human thought. We find many definitions since the Sanskrit texts, in *The Bible*, Aristotle, Plato, etc.: "Truth will make you free" we can read in *The Bible*. There is an exhaustive list of meanings; my intention is just to mention some of them.

Freedom may mean physical freedom, like moving from one place to another. It may mean psychological freedom, spontaneity inherent in man's nature. We discuss internal freedom and external freedom, and civil freedom within the framework of the law. There is also freedom of speech, academic freedom, etc.

Some meanings might be ambiguous and contradictory, such as freedom of the press, which can be many times a way of manipulating or conditioning the public to think in some ways against his freedom to think.

To most philosophers, freedom has meant through the centuries:

- The capacity to choose freely between two options;
- A liberation, the capacity of freeing oneself from irrational passions, sufferings, and limitations.

Freedom implies an option of the will. There can be no freedom of will without awareness, without autonomy or independence to act. Depending on the context, we can use them as political, economic, moral or psychological meanings.

In simple terms, if I would ask you right now, "What is freedom?" you might answer in the same manner that some of my students answer whenever I ask the same question: "Doing whatever you want, whenever you want to do it."

While Montessori would agree that following one's wishes without interference is freedom, she would also say that without discipline, a person:

a) Does not really know what he/she wants, and

b) Is unable to do what he/she chooses.

For Montessori, freedom means the ability to choose what is good, based on the principle that "good" is what is good for man, and "evil" or "bad" is what is detrimental to man. It is the ability to choose from within, guided by an inner teacher who follows a vital urge of cosmic laws, that leads him in an unconscious way.

In the normal development of a healthy child it is not believed that much of the time, if presented with a free choice, he will choose what is good for his growth. This he does because it tastes good, feels good, gives pleasure and enjoyment. This implies that he knows better than anyone else what is good for him.

This makes sense if we agree that most basically, we all seek what is good for ourselves. To help the child means not that the adult satisfy his needs directly but rather, make possible for him to fulfill his needs and make his own choices.

The problem of free choice comes when we cannot figure out what is really good, and once we have decided what is good, we are unable to act on it. We are so conditioned by external demands that we have lost the ability to know what we want or what is really good for our development.

If we stop to think for a moment – what is the source of our goals and our desires? Is the source of our desires coming from ignorance about our true needs? Are our desires or goals motivated by external influences or negative emotions, which are psychologically destructive elements that actually enslave us in the "freedom" to pursue them? How can we educate our children to fulfill their needs if we do not recognize our own needs?

Finally, one day, we find that we know what we want, but we cannot carry it out because the problem now is that our desires conflict with each other and our desires conflict with other's desires.

Preparing ourselves to solve these problems, so that true freedom may be achieved, is what discipline is all about.

Erich Fromm writes: "Freedom consists not in doing what one pleases and what circumstances invite you, but in being able without hindrance or restraint, to do in a direct way what is good for your development according to the laws of the structure of human existence."[4]

In reality, the problem is not so much how we define freedom as much as knowing whether or to what extent we are really and concretely free. We are so conditioned by society that freedom seems to be not a fact but only a possibility. It has to be conquered; it has to be an achievement of the human person. It has to be in spite of the obstacles and the conditions we are constantly exposed to. In Bergson's words: "To be free is to conquer freedom."

Only when an individual chooses, under his own impulses and not under the will of another, is he acting freely. Only when his choice is guided by reason (knowledge) is he acting freely. When it is his choice, then he accepts the responsibility and the consequences of his decision. It is freedom of choice based on knowledge.

When you know what you want and you know your limitations, then you can make the decision with responsibility, which is the ability to respond, and accept the consequences.

Montessori says, "Free choice is one of the highest of all mental processes. Only the child, deeply aware of his need for practice and for the development of his spiritual life, can really be said to choose freely."[5]

To know what we really want, we must be sensitive to our innermost needs. Children are sensitive to their inner needs. Children can remain so when the adults around them do not continually become an obstacle to their development. Children can remain so when they do not obstruct the path of human development.

Montessori states that to be able to have responsibility, freedom cannot be separated from discipline. Freedom and discipline are like two sides of a coin.

What is discipline?

Just like the word freedom the word discipline is used in different contexts.

The word discipline in the dictionary is synonymous with punishment, a command or order from external sources. It makes you think of an authoritarian government or an adult trying to control with orders, mistrust and the supervising control that is necessarily implied by the belief that children or youngsters are evil.

The word discipline comes from disciple, a follower, one that has to follow rules and accepts limits given by a

teacher. Discipline, in simple terms, is to be able to follow a rule of life whenever it is necessary.

When a child is born he has an inner drive – force of life, vital energy – an inner teacher, that directs him towards the actualization of all his potentialities through self-construction. He needs to construct himself through experiences in the environment and adapt to it. To be able to do this, he has to be free to obey an inner teacher, he has to discipline himself and grow according to the laws of nature that set a pattern for the structure of human existence. He has to fulfill his task – that of contributing to the whole plan.

One must be truthful to the laws of nature – a master greater than us – the cosmic plan that has limits which balance and harmonize the whole universe.

For Montessori there is no freedom without discipline, but it is an active discipline. Everything that exists in the universe follows natural laws of development and certain patterns. Man, as part of the cosmic plan, needs to follow certain laws of development. When man follows these laws he is acting with discipline. He is truthful to himself and the laws that govern optimal development. It means obedience to the laws that govern optimal human development. It is a discipline that comes from within and is not imposed from external sources.

This discipline is not related to punishment and coercion that leads to immobility. It is not the "thinking chair" or "time out." A child who is made to be quiet and silent is not a disciplined child but a paralyzed one. An individual is disciplined when he is master of himself, when he can control himself and when he can follow his inner teacher.

Freedom in a prepared environment is a fundamental principle of Montessori education, but it is freedom with limits, freedom with responsibility and it has two directions:

a) To be able to do things
b) Limits and limitations

To be able to follow his inner teacher a child needs to be independent and have motives for activity with intelligent purposes. We need to provide an environment adequate to his needs and encourage discipline through work. Self-discipline, inner-discipline comes as a result of work.

The relation between freedom and independence has a different connotation for Montessori. She gives a wider meaning to independence than to freedom. It is possible that a person may be independent without being free, but it is not possible to have true freedom without having acquired independence as a basis. Each level of independence in a developing organism comes as a result of the acquisition of a new function. An animal, as independent as it may seem, cannot acquire freedom because freedom to choose is related to the power of thought and reasoning. Each act in man is necessarily preceded by an intellectual act, a judgment. To be able to make choices the child needs to be independent. Having a choice and exercising it is the beginning of responsibility and freedom.

When we prepare an environment in which the child may act freely, in which he can find motives of activity that will help him to develop, we are guiding him towards freedom. We provide opportunities for him to be independent. This means that he can perform activities without the immediate assistance or direction of an adult. To let the child be himself is not permissiveness, indulgence or over protection. It is love with respect for the child's own inner signals. He is not abandoned to misbehave, because there are limits in the environment that must be followed. We cannot give a true freedom of choice without limits in the environment.

A person that can be a master of himself is a disciplined person. A person that acts because of external orders, is a slave of another's will. When a child is not allowed his freedom, more and more external control is necessary to keep him restrained.

Freedom, independence and discipline have to be conquered to be able to respond to any activity, which leads to order, harmony, and development. True freedom comes only when you are in contact with your inner-self. Freedom depends on the level of personal consciousness, the concept of one's self and the world around us. It has to be experimented and conquered step by step. There is no freedom *from*, but freedom *to*.

Everything that helps man to be himself is an education for freedom. All that restrains his being, destroys his freedom. What we are talking about here is not a free education but an education to be able to be free in the practice of freedom.

Responsibility

Responsibility is the result of freedom and discipline. It is a task of a human being since birth and can only be acquired through experiences in the environment.

Responsibility is my response to a request that I feel to be my concern. "Responsibility and response have the same root, respondere – 'to answer.' To be responsible means to be ready to respond."[6]

To be able to respond you have to know what you want and you have to know how to do it. To be ready to respond, a human being needs to have knowledge and the ability to do what is requested. When the child has to make decisions beyond his ability to respond, he feels overwhelmed and insecure.

Responsibility is not a duty imposed upon me from the outside. It is a response to do something that I know how to do. If there is lack of knowledge or ignorance about what is requested of a child or a youngster, we cannot ask for responsibility. The responsibility goes to the person that did not give them (child or youngster) enough information.

The first responsibility of a newborn is to breathe, to eat, to digest and to excrete; no one can do it for him. His organism is prepared to do this task and he has to do it to survive. These first responsibilities are unconscious and instinctive; however, they are an answer to an inner drive, a force of life that guides the child towards his full development and survival.

The laws of nature protect the child by giving him unconscious directions. Through activities in the environment during the process of growing, the child becomes conscious of his own skills and responds to those activities that he knows how to do. However, the child has developmental limitations and needs the protection of an intelligent adult to prepare an environment in which he can overcome obstacles for his

development and become responsible.

In a Montessori environment the child is helped to develop his will so he can make the right choices.

The will is the manifestation of the vital energy. It is a conscious expression of the life force. It is the maximum direction of movements. Without the actions performed there is no manifestation of the will, as the external expression of the will is only found in movements.

Montessori says: "There can be no manifestation of the will without completed action. He who thinks of performing a good action, but leaves it undone, he who desires to atone for an offence, but takes no steps to do so, he who proposes to go out, to pay a call or to write a letter, but goes no farther in the matter, does not accomplish an exercise of the will. To think and to wish is not enough. It is action which counts."[7]

In a Montessori environment the child is helped to develop his will. The educator is a kind of mediator between the environment and the child. She observes the child's needs and offers the opportunity for him to choose what he needs. The child becomes obedient to his inner laws. If the adult understands this aspect of self-construction and respects it the child will obey him. However, to be able to obey the child needs to develop his will and freely choose to follow another's wish.

Will and obedience are very much related to each other. Obedience may well imply a sublimation of the individual's own wills."

If the inner urge of the child has been protected during the first years of life, it is possible to see a disciplined child that knows what he wants and is able to manifest his will through his free choices.

However, this is not the reality in our schools and homes. Parents make many mistakes and the child is not responsible for all of his actions. He needs some limits placed by an adult who has the role of a humanistic authority (parent or teacher).

For a certain period of time, the adult is the authority while the child is conquering his freedom, independence and self-control. This means that the adult gives free choices to a certain extent and makes some decisions for the child until he has the knowledge to be responsible for his actions.

Which type of authority?

Among other definitions in the dictionary, authority means: the power to determine; the right to control; a power or right delegated or given; right to respect or acceptance of one's word, command, thought, etc.; a ruling."

It seems there are two types of authority: one based on knowledge and experience, and another one based on control and power that becomes an authoritarian type. The authoritarian type is always in control because it does not trust the child's power to be responsible, does not believe that the child is ever mature, and will not let the child act without supervision. This type shows that he is in control all the time. The rules and limits are given for his benefit and not for the collective interest. This type is defensive and chooses to be possessive, dominant and indifferent towards the needs of the child. This type of authority provokes fear, guilt, submission, and lack of self-esteem in the child. The relationship is similar to a master and a slave.

The other type of authority is that of an experienced leader and an enthusiastic apprentice. This type understands that he is the authority only for a certain period of time until the child can be responsible for his actions. As soon as the child shows, through his choices and independent actions, that he has acquired a new level of responsibility, the authority withdraws step by step. It trusts the process of development and is always open to learning if he makes mistakes. The rules and limits are based on the collective interest and are given with an attitude that will invite the child to acquire responsibility. The child becomes the master of his own thoughts and actions and is able to control himself, conquering inner discipline and progressing into a self-confident, responsible individual. This type of humanistic authority is like a frame of reference for the child that gives him a sense of security.

In a prepared environment the directress is the authority at the beginning of the year. She has the experience and the knowledge and establishes limits to help the child adapt to the environment. After she has given enough presentations for the child to acquire more knowledge and control of himself, she trusts the free choices of the child and indirectly continues guiding him towards the full development of his potentialities. It becomes freedom with limits.

Which limits? Among others, let us give an idea:

The collective interest. The freedom of the child must have as a limit the collective interest. That means that he may not do anything to hurt himself or to damage others.

His freedom is allowed until he infringes upon to the freedom of another. If the earth is our prepared environment we all have a responsibility to care for this environment. We cannot contaminate or pollute the oceans, the air, etc. because it belongs to all living organisms. By not being aware of this limit we must pay the consequences for our actions.

Knowledge must precede choice. No child is allowed to work with something that has not been presented or that he does not know how to use. With this limit we see the deep intuition of Montessori about knowing and volition. When the child wants to choose an activity with materials, he must see how to use it before he can do the activity. When he knows its appropriate use, he can use it with an intelligent purpose and be successful. He does not act just to know but to grow and be responsible. He needs this action to expand his mind, to control and coordinate his movements. Doing a task that he knows how to perform leads him to new discoveries that promote his development and his independence.

Correct use of the material. The manner in which the child uses the material has to have an intelligent purpose. The child's development comes through the progress towards perfection provided by the correct use of the material. By having the opportunity to work with the essence of the material, the child educates and disciplines himself. Each piece of material is designed to achieve a particular aim. The child can explore and make variations after he has experienced the purpose of the activity.

The number of materials in the environment is limited. There must be only those materials with which the

children are working. Other materials should be put away and brought out when they are needed. There should be just one of each material. The child will develop respect and patience while waiting for an exercise that another child is using. With this limit the child overcomes possessiveness and develops social skills. After working with a piece of material, the child has to put it back in order and in the same way and position in which he found it, thus developing respect and responsibility.

The child is free within these limits and he abides by them with joy because they make his life predictable and help him to feel secure and in control. In the prepared environment there is freedom for individuality.

Nature reveals itself in diversity. It is like an artist who never repeats herself; it is as fingerprints from the hand that are never equal. Each mind is a special creation and constructs a unique system of knowledge. The only possibility for a child to develop his special abilities and his own methods of organizing his experience, and to discover his surroundings and himself is through a prepared environment which can keep his freedom safe. Many times these possibilities are destroyed when the adult does not understand or accept his task to be the authority for a certain period of time.

Montessori tells us that when there are problems with discipline in a group it is because freedom is lacking. At this moment the directress has to observe with deep interest what limits are established. The chaos in a group or in a family is a control of error for the adult. What type of authority/leadership is he carrying out? Is there an authoritarian figure? Is the work the child is doing his own choice or imposed? Are the activities a challenge or an obstacle for the child's development?

Montessori says: "But what kind of freedom has he been given? The only true freedom for an individual is to have the opportunity to act independently. That is the condition *sine qua non* of individuality. There is no such thing as an individual until a person can act by himself."[10]

Conditions that promote freedom and responsibility

- A prepared adult that has the knowledge of human development and believes in education as a help to life
- A prepared environment for each plane of development
- Opportunities for acquiring successive levels of independence
- Possibilities for the will of the child to develop
- The option of having free choice to make decisions
- Accepting mistakes or errors as opportunities for learning
- Democratic limits
- The possibility for the child to participate and collaborate in every aspect of his environment
- Respect, interest, knowledge, love and responsibility for the child

Obstacles to freedom and responsibility

- No limits/rules - Over permissiveness is associated with insecurity, antisocial aggressiveness and inconsistency. These will result in lack of stable values for guiding behavior, insecurity and vacillation in meeting problematic circumstances in life.
- Rigid standards - The child will have a tendency to rigidity, severe conflicts, guilt, self-condemnation and self-devaluation. It leads to excessive condemnation of self for socially disapproved behavior.
- Overprotection - Leads to submission, inadequacy, lack of initiative, tendency to passive dependency in relations with others.
- Overindulgence - Selfish, demanding, with inability to tolerate frustration. The child is rebellious to any type of authority. Seeking attention and lack of responsibility.
- Faulty Parental Models - The child internalizes unethical or socially undesirable attitudes and behaviors.
- Contradictory Demands - The child is confused and lacks an integrated frame of reference. Self-devaluation.[11]
- Rejection - Feelings of insecurity and isolation. Attention seeking with a negative and hostile behavior. A child who is unable to give and to receive affection.

Conclusion

The importance of freedom with responsibility in our world today is immense. The circumstances that exist in the life of a child are a threat if the child has not acquired a strong personality. It is our task to help the child be free to make the right choices, and the right decisions. No one can give another freedom; no one can discipline another. It has to come from within. Responsibility is a process and has to be attained by means of experiences in the environment. Our responsibility is to acknowledge the request of the child who is asking, "Help me to do it by myself. Trust me. I will make it."

Let me finish with this sentence from Montessori: "The child is the spiritual builder of mankind, and obstacles to his free development are the stones in the wall by which the soul of man has become imprisoned."[12]

Notes

[1] Montessori, Maria, *Education and Peace*, Clio Press, Oxford, England, 1949, Reprinted 1992, p. 28.

[2] Ibid., p. 24.

[3] Montessori, Maria, *The Absorbent Mind*, Clio Press, Oxford, England, 1992, p. 22.

[4] Fromm, Erich, *Escape from Freedom*, Fawcet World Library, U.S.A.

[5] Montessori, Maria, *The Absorbent Mind*, Clio Press, Oxford, England, 1992, p. 247.

[6] Fromm, Erich, *Man for Himself – An Inquiry into the Psychology of Ethics*, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc. U.S.A., 1947, p. 105.

[7] Montessori, Maria, *The Advanced Montessori Method Vol. 1*, Clio Press, Oxford, England, p. 132-133.

[8] Montessori, Maria, *The Absorbent Mind*, Clio Press, Oxford, England, p. 234.

[9] *Random House Unabridged Dictionary, Second Edition*, Random House, Inc., New York, N.Y., 1993.

[10] Montessori, Maria, *Education and Peace*, Clio Press, Oxford, England, 1988, p. 55.

[11] Montessori, Maria, *Education and Peace*, Clio Press, Oxford, England, 1988, p. 201.

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Active Discipline

Silvana Montanaro, M.D.

"Active discipline: a perfect relationship between the child and the environment."

Maybe it is necessary to clarify the word *discipline*. It comes from "disciple" (lat. *discere*), someone who loves to learn so he decides to follow someone who has the knowledge/expertise the disciple is looking for. This decision implies the desire of becoming a follower, a listener, a lover of the teacher.

Are young children such a type of person? We must answer "yes" because we know that children, entering the world with great potential but not defined skills, have the need to follow someone (at least one human being) in order to survive physically and to acquire human characteristics. They are psychic embryos and their development into complete human beings needs the presence of an external environment where they must find the models of their human growth.

But which kind of disciple is the child? A passive recipient of external knowledge, a follower of any type of adult/teacher? Even if children depend, like every living being, on their environment, still, like every living being, they need to find in this environment the appropriate things necessary for their development.

If children need adults and adults wish to help children, why is there such a problem in obtaining the right attitude for following the model?

The problem is such that we have the impression, looking into the past of pedagogy (a branch of knowledge as old as human beings themselves), that the desire of following, of accepting with love the directions of the teacher, is unusual, something against human nature. We seem to be born without the desire for discipline. We want freedom but not discipline. This paradox can be solved only when we can put into context human development and what it entails.

It has been Montessori who, because of her scientific preparation, humility and great patience in observing, could eventually explain and solve this problem. In reality the pedagogical approach to the children's education was wrong; we were trying to stop their energy instead of offering the forces of life a proper way to be used.

Active discipline is Montessori's response to the problem of converting rebellious children into disciples, loving followers of the adults they depend on for their own survival and development. To understand the problem we must consider how it is possible to mix freedom and discipline and arrive at *active discipline*. She tells us: "We do not believe that an individual is disciplined only when he is artificially made as silent as a mute and as motionless as a paralytic. Such one is not disciplined but annihilated. We claim that an individual is disciplined when he is the master of himself and when he can, as a consequence, control himself – when he must follow a rule of life. Such a concept of active discipline is not easy to understand nor to attain. But it certainly embodies a lofty principle of education that is quite different from the absolute and undiscussed coercion that produce immobility."[1]

Even more interesting is the fact that Montessori tells us that while the child must be active, the adults must be passive observers... "and their passivity should be compounded of an anxious scientific curiosity and respect for the phenomena which they wish to observe."

Here, from *Discovery of the Child*, is what we have to keep in mind: "Rebellion, misbehavior, non-collaboration in children are the expression of a deep disease, of a reaction to the obstacles to the river of life which is deviated into wrong paths because we think that discipline is equal of immobility."

Montessori discipline is active, linked with work, chosen freely, in response to the inner urges of the human tendencies and sensitive periods. It is a work that brings independence. The work and the active experiences in the environment are the mental food necessary for a harmonious development. The psychic embryo, the child of the first three years of life, must be active, so we do not limit purposeful actions but show how to perform them.

With our understanding of the children's needs we become able to see the relationship between action and discipline and can better combine these two components. The difficulty we see as parents/teachers/adults is that, when viewed superficially, action and discipline seem contradictory and impossible to put together. From the past we have received the idea that children come with bad tendencies and it is our responsibility to be strong in correcting these tendencies and transform the savage child into a civilized human being. Education was supposed to use power not compassion, and every "wrong" manifestation of the child was looked at as an expression of the innate wrong and not of our mistakes. It has been the genius of Montessori, combined with her scientific preparation and capacity of observing without preconceived ideas, that made it possible to "discover" the child and see in his tantrums and rebellion the response to the violence we were doing to his development. We were, even if in good faith, impeding children from accomplishing their internal mission, the mission entrusted to them by life: to grow and become a complete human being. Once this was understood, and a prepared environment was given to them, children of any age demonstrated great love for the environment, great respect for it and great capacity for self-discipline and concentration on their work, since the first moment of their life. Once Montessori understood this and could prepare materials/work for both handicapped and normal children, the miracle of discipline appeared in her environment. She tells us that independence is the necessary first step to discipline because, for the growing child, independence is "a question of life." So we come to the core of the problem: children must be given independence. "We cannot be free if we are not independent."

The educators must gain knowledge of human development, recognize the necessity for work at any age, prepare an environment where action/work is possible so independence can be attained and, from independence, active discipline.

"We have only to apply these principles to see a calm come upon a child which characterizes and illuminates all his actions. There is thus truly born a new child, a child that is morally superior to one who is treated as a helpless and incompetent being. This inner liberation is accompanied by a new sense of dignity. From now on the child becomes interested in his own conquests and in educating himself. No punishments or rewards are needed."[2]

We know that it is difficult to give up old habits and prejudices but we are supported by almost 100 years of Montessori education producing "active discipline" everywhere it is applied. ■

Notes

[1] Maria Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*, Ballantine Books, p. 49.

[2] Ibid., p.59.

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Theoretical Tenents of Freedom and Responsibility for the 6–12 Year Olds

Phyllis Pottish-Lewis

A theoretical examination of the human qualities necessary for a contributing individual of society that can be fostered and developed in a child, and an analysis and recognition of the elements and characteristics of an educational system required to occasion this development.

Introduction

In the March 1900 issue of the magazine *The Philistine*, editor Elbert Hubbard portrayed a true story that over time has become immortal. It was a short story, but of such import that its message is apt for any time and any culture. It is called, "A Message to Garcia."

The United States, in defense of Cuba, had declared war against Spain. In April 1898, the American chief of staff required certain information from the leader of the Cuban forces, General Calixto Garcia, but was unable to establish any communication with him through the Spanish blockade. Accordingly, a young lieutenant, Andrew Rowan, was dispatched from Washington with the task of making his way into Cuba to find General Garcia, though no one in Washington knew just where the insurgent general might be. Rowan landed secretly on the coast of Cuba in a small boat, learned through local patriots where to look for Garcia, and made his way to the general, got the information that he sought, and, with the same privacy, retraced his route to the coast and back to Washington.

The resourcefulness of the young lieutenant was, of course, praiseworthy in the extreme. It was that aspect of the incident that so impressed Hubbard that it evoked the best of his skill in the short essay. He made it into an impressive sermon to young people, a lesson in success. "To take a message to Garcia" has become a byword for people over time all throughout the world; it means, "show that you are resourceful and inventive, that you can think independently, exert a high degree of self-discipline, accept responsibilities which you carry through to success."

What exactly was the message that people recognized embodied in this essay that they wanted to convey to the people of their company, state, or country? From the universal popularity of this article, one could infer that all peoples of the world recognize the importance of developing in their citizens the initiative, ingenuity and responsibility that young Andrew Rowan possessed in order "to take a message to Garcia." Hubbard says, "Civilization is one long, anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asks shall be granted. He is wanted in every city, town and village – in every office, shop, store and factory. The world cries out for such; he is needed and needed badly – the man who can "Carry a Message to Garcia."[1]

Dr. Montessori's life's work was devoted to finding a way that would ensure the most propitious "education of the human potentials," of which responsibility ranks very high; in other words, a way to unlock the Lt. Rowan in us all. It was her belief that if one provided the child with the right kind of opportunities, these opportunities could assist in the natural unfolding and development of the child's potentials, and enable him to be a stronger member of society, one for whom the world would "cry out." She believed that education should enhance the development of all potentials lying dormant within the child in order to create members of society, who eventually could one day function as responsibly and efficiently as the young lieutenant had. She has said, "Not in the service of any political or social creed should the teacher work, but in the service of the complete human being, able to exercise in freedom a self-disciplined will and judgement, unperverted by prejudice and distorted by fear."[2]

This complete human being is one who has developed to his fullest extent all the potentials that lie dormant at birth, which eventually will permit the child to serve his society as needed.

Therefore, the greatest service an education could offer a developing human being would be one that concerned itself not simply with an academic acquisition of facts, but with helping the individual achieve those qualities and characteristics recognized as essential for the attainment and maintenance of a productive, successful, and contented life, such as Lt. Rowan must have enjoyed. These qualities and characteristics are not mysterious and unidentifiable. They are clearly recognizable and so can be addressed in a very deliberate approach.

Potentials to be developed in a climate of freedom

- **A sense of independence:** This is a characteristic that is so vital that without it a child, and then unfortunately the ensuing adult, will be dependent always on external sources for assistance in all regards. A dependence can be either physical or mental, with both forms being detrimental to the developing person. A dependency of any kind will curb much of the creative abilities and functioning that exist naturally within the person. It is only when an individual becomes a free thinker and a free actor, rather than following blindly or fearfully the options and dictates of others, that he can best make a real contribution to his society.
- **A sense of responsibility:** A child, who one day becomes an adult, will take his place amongst a group of people in his society. To be a dependable member of society one must be a responsible one. Irresponsibility as a prevailing characteristic of the members of any society, serves to weaken and destroy the society's basic foundations.
- **A sense of observation:** For a member of society to act responsibly, he first must proceed from knowledge. Most of this knowledge is obtained from careful objective observation. To observe

thoroughly is essential for the acquisition of real and useful facts. Facts that are imagined or contrived only create a shaky foundation for action. From the acquisition of real knowledge derived from meticulous observations, a society member can proceed in a responsible manner to serve adequately.

- **The ability to analyze:** Once a member of society has gathered his real information, he then must be able to analyze his data methodically. In this way he will be able to put things into perspective to see how some things can exert an influence, and thus affect other things. He will also be able to determine, through analysis, what alteration may be required for change.
- **Make critical choices:** After gathering precise information and accurately analyzing it, one can make critical choices. For choices to be responsible, critical and well thought out, they must be founded on sound evidence, analyzed carefully and exactly. To make the best judgements people must develop the ability to discern and perceive distinct subtleties, ones that may be elusive, before making a final decision.
- **The expression of language:** The development of this potential is crucial, as it is the tool that one uses to communicate one's thoughts, ideas and feelings to another. Without the full development of this potential, any ideas or notions that may have been conceived, no matter how magnificent or wonderful, will remain locked inside with no door from which to emerge.
- **To exercise an obedience of the right kind:** The act of true obedience is to control one's will by exhibiting a self-discipline that would allow one to repress or sublimate any selfish urges in favor of acting for the good of the whole. This kind of obedience is positive and integral to the fundamental harmonious functioning of any society.

These are a few qualities which lie in potential in children and can be consciously developed or educated to equip a person with the tools he needs to perform obligations and missions which might befall him as he functions satisfactorily in the world. These abilities must become so ingrained in a child that they eventually become second nature to him, and when faced with a task, the child should be able to master all of his talents in the pursuit of a successful completion of that task.

Elementary child has to make himself a member of society

To understand how the Montessori elementary environment helps the elementary child to actualize his potentials – become a Lt. Rowan – it is necessary to comprehend the child's fundamental constitution and the interplay between it and his world. During the first six years of his life, in the first plane of development, *the child constructed an individual*, who, to a certain degree, developed independence, responsible behavior, the ability to communicate to express his ideas and feelings, and an understanding of the society in which he lives. During the next six years of his life, in the second plane of development, the child's task is different since the individual has been constructed already. At this time the task is to learn exactly and more concretely what it means to be a *functioning member of a larger society*. As the child pursues his investigation he will continue to develop and refine those essential qualities that will help him contribute to society at large. To make this construction successfully the child must have an accurate knowledge and be aware of the components of society. Without that information he cannot proceed from a sound basis. To this end, he must acquire through his own explorations and discoveries a reasonable understanding of the facets of society and its members, and he must have continued freedom to practice being a valuable and constructive member.

Essential components inherent in an elementary Montessori environment

Freedom

To this comprehensive development in the child's journey to adulthood – the continued actualization of his potentials as he learns how to exist in society – Dr. Montessori turned her intellect and experience. It is quite one thing to recognize the characteristics required to "take a message to Garcia," and quite another to devise a method by which these characteristics can develop to their greatest ability. Based on her observations of children and childhood, Dr. Montessori reasoned that for a child to develop naturally and spontaneously, there were a number of conditions that must be recognized and implemented. One of these was the notion of providing the child with an environment which offered him certain freedoms. She believed that a child must be afforded the freedom to undertake his self-construction according to his own nature. She says, "Liberty, the sole means, will lead to the maximum development of character, intelligence and sentiment; and will give to us, the educators, peace, and the possibility of contemplating the miracle of growth.[3]

This freedom is offered the child, but this is done in connection with real and meaningful activities on which he can labor for the express purpose of forming and expanding the powers latent within him. Again, Dr. Montessori offers us the benefit of her experience when she states, "It would not be possible to conceive liberty of development, if by its very nature the child were not capable of a spontaneous organic development, if the tendency to develop his energies (expansion of latent powers), the conquest of the means necessary to a harmonious innate development, did not already exist. In order to expand, the child, left at liberty to exercise his activities, ought to find in his surroundings something organised in direct relation to his internal organisation which is developing itself by natural laws."[4]

The process by which the child thus benefits the most has been delineated clearly by Dr. Montessori. An environment must be provided that is replete with select and meaningful activities from which the child can choose freely to work. With these components, freedom and activities, the child can begin the process of educating his essential characteristics. When this kind of freedom is provided in a prepared environment with a teacher whose re-

sponsibility it is to link the child to that environment, the children are able to develop more fully the human potentials which lie promising in each of them.

This development occurs spontaneously in an environment where freedom is offered. However, it is a freedom within limits. The limits provide structure to the liberty, and nurture the development. The children are free to *choose their own work* as long as that choice is one which will further their abilities; they are *free to schedule their own work* as long as that schedule is effective and productive; they are *free to engage in lengthy discussions* as long as they are cooperative, considerate and accomplish their objectives; they are *free to work in groups* as long as they develop and preserve the skills to maintain a basic harmony in the social unit by putting the needs of group before individual selfish ones. The children are accountable for responsible choices in all of these regards. It is through these freedoms balanced by limits, that the children have the opportunity to develop and nurture, little by little, degree by degree, the basic human potentials that will one day be required to allow them to perform as valuable members of society and thoughtfully fulfill their obligations.

Teacher's Responsibility

The task of effecting the balance between the freedoms offered in the classroom and the corresponding requisite responsibility falls to the adult attempting to implement the principles of Dr. Montessori. This task is one of the essential responsibilities of the teacher; it is not an easy one.

Teachers first must recognize and understand the value of offering freedom; this is their responsibility. Then they must take care not to intrude on that precious freedom once it has been extended successfully. If *assignments are imposed* the children will have little opportunity to learn to make their own propitious choices; if the children *are told when* to learn everything, they will fail to learn how to schedule their own time carefully; if children are *not left free to sort out* their difficulties, they will not learn to solve problems; if they are *spoon-fed the reasons* that lie behind all matters and mysteries, they will fail to exercise their rational faculties; if they are *not free to work together*, they will be deprived of opportunities to cooperate and collaborate; if *talking is not a freedom* extended them, they will never learn to communicate and express themselves and their ideas adequately; if they are limited *to working in their immediate environments*, their opportunities to develop independence and responsibility will be stunted and impaired.

But above all, a greater disservice will have been done to the child if the teacher acts for the child in all these respects rather than permitting him the freedom to act for himself. The implication to the child will be, "you are incapable of making the best choice, therefore I must choose for you." An approach that makes the choices for the child will not only impede the fruition of the potentials, it will create a dependency in the child, which, when he moves into society, will create an individual whose essential characteristics will be crippled, preventing him from functioning successfully without guidance from others.

Making use of natural tendencies and psychological characteristics in the child's development

As Dr. Montessori pondered the elementary child and his ensuing development, she observed in her decades of work with children that nature seemed to endow this child with tendencies and psychological characteristics that would assist him in this very particular development, just as nature did with the child in the first plane. She reasoned that since these characteristics seem to be both natural and universal, the environment prepared for the developing citizens of the future must provide for the free expression of these characteristics. Actually, Dr. Montessori went one step further than the mere recognition of these characteristics and the allowance of their free expression. She believed that they could, nay, ***should*** be used as tools in the required constructions of the individual at the different planes, since it was to effect these constructions that nature endowed the child with these remarkable abilities.

Imagination and Reason

Hitherto, the primary child explored his environment with an absorbent mind, the natural and universal ability he possessed that allowed him to make his construction of an individual. With this absorbent mind the child could take in facts and qualities from the environment with exceptional ease. As he explored the world of his environment he also applied his sensory abilities in order to comprehend and digest the world at large. However, at about age six the mind of the child changes with his transition to the second plane of development. This is a psychological change corresponding to the changing natural and universal characteristics. The elementary child no longer uses the absorbent mind and the sensory powers as his principal tools. Rather, he engages reason and imagination to discover the elements of the world and universe. His imagination becomes a tool by which he can picture the past with all of its fascinations and mysteries, while his reason can help him comprehend and understand the results and consequences of thoughts, actions and decisions made by people. The future, too, is now in reach of this child, as he employs his imagination and reason to grasp the possibilities of what might be in store for him. His imagination allows him to envision a role for himself, and his reason permits him to determine if his creation is sound and feasible. As the child works in the elementary environment, free to exercise his reasoning powers and his imagination, he will become more practiced and adept at using these natural talents. The children *use their reason* to make judgements and to analyze. Therefore, their explorations and work must embody the experience of reason.

If teachers wish to serve the child, they must free him to reason things out for himself. It is imperative that they not reason for him. Instead they must provide and protect his opportunities to reason through to a conclusion independently. If the child is given the opportunity to reason then he can, and through doing, he can develop the ability to reason by exploring with his imagination. Dr. Montessori says, "[T]he child must learn by his own individual activity, being given a mental freedom to take what he needs, and not

to be questioned in his choice."[5]

Order as a Reason for Laws and Directives

Another natural aspect contributing to the child's development that undergoes a change when he moves into the second plane of development around six years of age is his sense of order. By this time the child has been able to generate an internal order for himself derived from the external order of the primary environment. As the child earlier explored his own society, simultaneously absorbing the order within it, he observed its prevailing order and harmony. That order and harmony was preserved by the governing laws of the society. As the older child begins to explore the social fabric within the elementary class, he becomes more able to understand and accept its rules as he knows that, just as in the primary class, it is the underlying law and order that provides a security and harmony to life. At some level he recognizes that without a set of governing laws all order will dissipate into chaos.

Herd Instinct

The child from zero to six, makes the complete construction of an individual. At birth, he arrives completely dependent on those around him. By the age of six, that construction has been made. The child is an individual ready to launch into the next construction of becoming a member of a group. In order to propel him into this social construction with relative ease, nature endowed him with a desire to work with others. Dr. Montessori called this proclivity the "herd instinct." She believed that children used this characteristic to develop and practice those qualities that they would one day need to become full-fledged members of society. Just as they must do when they take their place in society, when children are free to work together, because they are drawn to each other naturally, they learn to function according to the rules and laws of government – rules which the group has adopted, and to which the members are expected to adhere. Children learn by experience that for there to be peace and harmony in the group the rules must be accepted and obeyed, otherwise order cannot prevail, only chaos. They also realize that for this harmony to exist, there must be cooperation amongst the members, as well as clear and honest communication. It soon becomes apparent to the children that frequently, to maintain the harmony of the whole group, individual members sometimes must suppress their personal wishes and desires when these desires conflict with those of the group. When a member of a group can accomplish this, he has truly arrived, as it marks the point of a due respect for the will of the whole.

Great Work

The task of becoming a productive, responsible, and valued member of society is a formidable one. Nature, however, has endowed the elementary child with additional characteristics to ensure this development. It has provided the second plane child with a great strength and endurance, which hitherto he has not possessed. This period is distinguished by a time when a child can work endlessly and with great interest on topics that have touched his imagination. By throwing himself into his work the child can accomplish all that he needs to build a sound foundation. It is only with a solid foundation derived from his own work that the child can move confidently and securely from childhood into adulthood. This period of great strength will assist the child in accomplishing his goals of developing those qualities that will enable him to function satisfactorily throughout life.

When a system of education recognizes and provides an environment in which children may freely express their natural tendencies and characteristics, we have a system that has a greater chance of helping them to naturally develop the potentials within. If this system of education takes account of the development of the human potential, it should result in an individual who will understand the workings of society, sufficiently, to be able to serve it.

Going-Out

In addition to the recognition of the natural endowments of the child and the allowance of their free expression within a Montessori elementary class, the elementary environment must incorporate other elements that provide opportunities for the child to work on developing his essential characteristics while allowing him to investigate the world around him. One of these opportunities Dr. Montessori called "going-out" because it allows the child to go out into society to see for himself its mysteries and mechanisms. The child must be free to go out in order to verify for himself the discoveries encountered in class. Therefore, the walls of the classroom must be extended to include the totality of society. This offering provides other opportunities for the children as well. It gives them the chance to manage themselves responsibly and to exert reasonable discipline independent of a guardian adult. Moreover, going-out is connected with the child's exploration of society. If he has to move into society then the child must know society, and in order to know it, he has to get out into it. He cannot know about society by merely listening to lectures on it. He must experience it himself. Dr. Montessori remarks, "To understand the importance of [going-out], which ought to permit social experiences, we must not be content to consider the children's outing a simple health-giving exercise. It is designed to bring the child's attainments to life for him. It is only thus that their realities will penetrate him. That is what we call experience.

"A child enclosed within limits however vast remains incapable of realizing his full value and will not succeed in adapting himself to the outer world."[6]

The opportunity to go-out is imperative since it is only through going-out that the child will be in touch with the behavior of his people and the laws and order that govern his society. What are the rules of the museum? How should the animals be treated in the zoo? What is the expected behavior in the library? The children must have a chance to learn and to practice accepting those rules, and by doing so, understand them and be responsible to them. They also must have the chance to practice at obedience to the prevailing laws, and by obeying them, adapt to what society reasonably asks.

Going-out is a notion that relates to several key potentials in the developing human being that were identi-

fied earlier. It relates directly to independence because to go out successfully achieves another degree of independence. This independence is relevant in two realms, the physical and the mental. In the physical realm, from going-out the child learns such matters as how to plan for his excursions, to look ahead at what he might need, to wear the appropriate attire for comfort, and to bring along the necessary tools. A mental independence is developed from going-out by the child's learning to cope with whatever exigencies the going-out entails and creates. This mental independence is related to logical thinking and the exercise of judgement.

Another key potential to which going-out is related is that of self-control. Can the children follow the rules of life, rules which have been determined to guard and protect the society? Self-control asks one to assume the responsibility of one's own conduct without requiring external monitoring. Children can recognize the need for self-control, and they realize that they need to assume responsibility for their own self-control without the need for an external agent. Taking on self-control is the recognition of responsibility.

Going-out is related to the will because it entails choice: where to go, what to do, what to take, what exactly to find out about this activity in which we are all engaged. It is not a case of having everyone involved going out, a responsible choice must be made as to who will leave the class. Careful consideration must be given as to what will be sought, and why it is sought, and what will be needed in the seeking. This is deliberating a real choice. Dr. Montessori says, "The first thing to do is to simplify the outing. It is necessary, then, to carry as few things as possible and, consequently, 'to choose.'"

Going-out should be related directly to the work of the child, his activities, and the development of his potentials. Thus, it springs from the interest of the child, not projects which have been organized by the teacher. This means that not all members of the class go out at once. In this there is a difference from traditional organized field trips, because goings-out are related to the child's work.

The going-out is related to relations with people outside and the discharging of a moral responsibility by showing courtesy and respect for those on the outside. The training for it begins in the class when the children are responsible for seeking permission for the visit. When they write for permission they must know how to write the appropriate letter, how to address politely people unknown to them, and how to use acceptable penmanship and paper. Once the visit is undertaken, the children practice the acceptable social behavior required for the event. When it is over, frequently there are notes of thanks to write to those people who enabled the visit to happen. This reinforces for the child that it is reasonable to have and express gratitude to those who have done him a service. This is a social responsibility of which the child ultimately becomes especially aware when granted the freedom to go-out.

Obviously, since going-out has so many essential elements that provide opportunities for the development of the child's potential, it must be an integral part of the freedoms offered in the elementary class, if the class is really to serve the needs of the developing child. One way to ensure that the child thus moves beyond the walls of the class is by limiting what is put inside the class. The class should never possess a full library, because if it did, there would be no reason to go out to the neighborhood library to find the missing information. In the same vein, a class should not contain a whole menagerie of animals or a whole nursery of plants, since this would restrict the child's need to go outside to explore nature. Serious thought must be given always regarding the preservation of the child's reasons and needs for going-out to explore his world.

Expectations

Another aspect beyond those naturally occurring in the child, which cannot be overlooked in enabling the child to develop to the fullest his human potentials, is having a set of expectations to which the child can aspire. In this regard a teacher plays an active and crucial role. She must provide the environment with the meaningful activities, and take care not to pose an impediment by obstructing the freedom that is offered. Moreover, once the child begins to demonstrate his abilities, she must expect him to use them always. Since children have been given the freedom in which to make this construction, and since the potentials are developing little by little, in order to crystallize into reality they must be exercised constantly. Thus, there must be an expectation that once these potentials surface, even slightly perceptibly, they must be used. If the children are asked to be capable and to meet their potentials, they will. If there is no expectation asked of them, then they may not rise to their potential.

Before being able to do this, however, teachers must understand clearly themselves the value of having expectations, and how these expectations, determined by the Montessori principles that guide their work, help the child to rise to loftier heights. Teachers continually must maintain the vision of what children truly are capable of. In fact, they must realize that in failing to have high expectations of the child's work, they handicap the child by robbing him of opportunities to develop great powers, sentencing him to a life of mediocrity. It is important for teachers to keep in sight the great heights to which children can soar and the great qualities that are waiting to be unleashed, when children are provided with sufficient direction and nurturing, and asked to be responsible to do their very best, a best which otherwise may never be attained simply because it was never asked of them.

Notion of Work

As Montessori teachers define and crystallize their expectations of children's work, they can draw on Dr. Montessori's views on the importance of work. In an article entitled *Child's Instinct To Work*, she wrote, "One must look for the aim of humanity in that activity which is transforming the earth. Man is here to work and his work is not for the good of himself but for this great construction which we call civilization, and it has transformed the earth from what it was to what it is, and is building up the social building which is civilization today.

"This conception is in fact the same as what really happens because all men must work and all social life is based upon the work of man. But it is evident that if man merely thinks of work as a

means to provide a living it is a much lower conception than that of the man who works in order to help his fellow men to build up cosmic work, work which affects the whole world. This helps one to conceive work as something which invites and helps instead of something which is forced upon one."[1]

These are words which must be heeded always, as teachers must understand and accept the great essence of work, and how it is necessary, not just for the development of a single child and his well-being, but ultimately for the success of humanity. When one truly comprehends this notion of work and its value, one need feel no doubts when a child is asked to be responsible for his work. In fact, if she does not expect the children to work, the teacher is derelict in her duty. If children, for some reason, do not work spontaneously and naturally, then a teacher must find ways to help them become involved in constructive work. But she must expect that work happens. If teachers, along with society, ignore the natural desire of the human being to work, then they cannot help but perpetuate a debilitating, limited and atrophied work ethic.

Illustration of How the Class Works

In order to envision more clearly how a Montessori elementary environment helps in the unfolding of these human potentials that I mentioned earlier, by offering freedom within limits while recognizing and using the natural assets of the child, let us consider the following illustration. Perhaps the teacher observes that after she has presented an initial fundamental lesson in botany, such as how the plant makes its food, a few children still seem interested in pursuing that subject more. Following the interest of the children, the teacher acts on her observation by giving them another lesson, for example, the kinds of vein systems in the leaf and their accompanying names. Again, as before, once she has given the lesson, the teacher leaves the children free to wonder and to explore, perhaps suggesting that they take their investigations out of the immediate environment. They may explore the leaves of the plants in the environment, both indoor and outdoor, to find others with the same vein characteristics, and perhaps also to find some with other kinds of vein systems. By leaving the children free to follow their interest, having just given them a bit of knowledge rather than inundating them with every detail about leaf systems, the teacher liberates the children to work independently. When the children in their freedom work independently, they are, in fact, developing their independence. This development takes place gradually. Also, if they take this freedom and work constructively and diligently, the children not only are becoming independent, requiring little adult intervention, but they are also becoming responsible. Through taking on the responsibility of actually working productively on their own, they are developing their ability to be responsible.

Having been given the language or the scientific names of the features of the varieties of vein systems, the children begin to use these names that are abstract symbols for physical characteristics when they are exploring. As they are used again and again, these names become the possession of the children. In this way the children fortify and build their vocabularies, while at the same time possessing the tools to express themselves precisely. Precise language supported by an exact vocabulary provides a buttress for intelligible communication.

During the process of examining plants with particular characteristics, the children closely observe the features to determine if a leaf has reticulate veins or if it has parallel veins. It is through this process by which the children develop their powers of observation. They look once, and then they look again to see exactly which vein system the leaf possesses. In this ceaseless looking, motivated by genuine interest, the children refine their powers of observation. As their exploration continues, still motivated by their interest, so does their observation. Once intrigued, they use this ability and apply it, not only to the plants in the classroom, but also to the plants in the school yard. Very soon they want to observe the plants on the street as they walk to school or the ones in their yard at home to see which vein systems particular plants possess. Because they are carefully observing leaves and in the habit of exact observation, it is possible that their field of observation might expand to flowers on the plant, or perhaps to the kinds of bark on the plant. Moreover, this developing heightened ability will not be limited just to the plants. It will extend to all areas of the child's world, because now it is a skill. The child possesses it, and he will use it in all realms.

Since the children are free to work in groups, the child probably did not leave the classroom alone, but among others with similar interests and in possession of the new lesson and language. As the children observe, explore and discover things, they also discuss. Naturally, there may be differences of opinions. Some members of the group may not agree that this kind of plant has a leaf system with parallel veins. This leads to debate, healthy argument, and the defending of one's position supported by reasons. Through this invaluable process the child is learning the fine art of expressing himself and analyzing his own position. He is learning this the only way it can be learned, by having the freedom to actually practice it, thus allowing the realities to penetrate him to the very core.

Eventually, the children will have to make decisions. They will want to determine if the plant has a vein system that is parallel or reticulate. They want to make a choice. When this choice is based on observation, reason, analysis, and thoughtful consideration, the choice is a critical one. Again, children learn to make critical choices by being left free to explore, consider, discuss, reason out, and finally to decide. It is unimportant what that choice is, because it is not the botany that matters. What does matter is the process in which the child engages to learn to make a final determination. The children learn to make decisions and to solve their problems on their own, independent of adult intervention, only by being allowed to involve themselves in a process.

It is a function of several elements inherent within a Montessori elementary class that helps the child to evolve to the degree that he would be capable of "taking a message to Garcia." Without *offering freedom limited by responsibility* to the children to work on purposeful activities; without recognizing the *child's natural tendencies* and assets

and using them to assist in his own construction; without *implementing opportunities* for the children to go out to determine for themselves the factors of which society is composed; without *expecting that children behave* and act according to a reasonably high standard, we do not offer children opportunities around which the development of essential potentials can naturally ensue. To ensure that society will have members who can act independently and responsibly, while possessing the powers of observation and articulation, in order ultimately to make reasoned choices, education must offer a way for these attributes to be developed consciously.

The Importance of Developing Ability to Evaluate Others

It is well for a system of education to provide for the careful and deliberate development of the human potentials, but for it to serve the child completely it also must provide a way for him to learn how to gauge for himself the success and progress of his development. Children have this opportunity within a Montessori elementary classroom. This opportunity for developing the ability to evaluate one's self, when used, will save the child from having to rely on external sources to measure his efforts and progress. This ability is essential for an individual to possess for it frees him from living according to the opinions and standards of others. There is a harmful message implicit in approaches where children must rely on external sources for their evaluation. That tacit message is, "you are not worthy to assess yourself, therefore, someone outside of yourself must determine and evaluate your work." This approach hinders the child's development. What will serve the child is to present him with a means by which he can clearly see and assess his own efforts. Instead, he becomes the monitor of his conduct and behavior, and is alone responsible for any alterations required, based on his own reasons. People who have not been free to develop this ability instead measure their worth by standards set by others and consequently, always are striving to meet the goals of external sources. If they cannot measure up to this external standard, they view themselves as inferior, even when the standard may have been untenable, unattainable or even inappropriate. In light of this, to help a child learn to evaluate his own performance, based on reasonable and real goals without interference from others, is to offer him a skill that will serve him throughout life.

Expectations

To this end, one of the first steps in self-evaluation is for the child to recognize and adopt for himself a standard of reasonable behavior, because it will be this standard by which he will evaluate his conduct. He can be helped to recognize constructive and acceptable behavior by understanding and observing the conduct so deemed in the class. This can be achieved by functioning in the class society with his peers in a climate of freedom. Dr. Montessori remarks, "It is difficult to make social relations real if one uses only the imagination; practical experience is necessary. One cannot awaken the conscience by talking about it. The child must exercise a constant watch over his own activities. Thus education can resolve its problems while realizing itself when it seeks to resolve them by means of acts."[1]

Once the child is fully and freely operational within the classroom he can then utilize a system by which to measure his efforts and accomplishments. It is his responsibility to evaluate himself and his own performance in respect to what could and should be asked of him as a contributing member of society. This ability to "self-evaluate" will not simply materialize when the need for it appears. It must be formed and polished, just as do the characteristics which eventually are to be evaluated. The possibility for this development should be inherent within the daily workings of a Montessori elementary classroom. Accordingly, let us examine in detail the steps involved in the child's acquisition of the ability to assess whether his performance is at par with the standards required for a valuable member of society.

Teacher's Recognition of the Expectations

Before a child can define for himself a standard of reasonable behavior he first must know what is expected of him as a member of society. When these standards are made clear to him, he will be fully aware of that to which he is responsible. He can choose to meet or not meet the defined and required expectations. The first step in this process, however, is for the teacher to recognize the importance of expectations, and believe that children will rise to whatever level is expected of them. Therefore, for the sake of the children, the expectations must be real and they must be lofty. If the child is given high expectations he will meet them, as he is endowed with the power of great work and therefore has a great ability. As noted previously, nature has given the child this psychological characteristic as a tool in his construction of himself as a valued member of society. Teachers must help the child to use all of his tools. Hence, they must expect the children to use these tools to aid in their development. It does not take much experience working with children to know that when presented with expectations they will meet them.

Another notion that the teacher must keep in mind is that clear and reasonable expectations arrived at through an accurate and complete understanding of the Montessori principles, rather than arbitrarily determined, become useful guidelines by which the children can measure their performances. These expectations become the child's standard by which he will conduct himself, by which he will evaluate himself, by which he measures himself and his accomplishments, and by which he determines if he has been responsible to his society.

Define Expectations for Children

In this interest it is the teacher's responsibility to define clearly and make the children aware of these expectations, the children's standard, during the first days of class. This can be done easily by sitting with the group as a whole, the small society which resides within the walls of the classroom, to discuss various aspects that relate to societies and their society in particular. One of the first things of which to make the children consciously aware is the elements that make up a society. A society is not just a country or a state or a town; it can be just a few people – such as within the classroom. And for soci-

ety to work harmoniously, all members have to work together for the sake of the whole. In order to do that there are rules and laws that must be devised to help the citizens govern themselves. It is through discussions of this nature and the child's ability to reason that the children realize that laws are made for the protection and flourishing of society and for themselves individually as members within society, rather than as prohibitions.

It is always crucial to enlist the services of the children in this process of defining the laws of society, and their responsibilities to these laws, since it is their society. The children must be encouraged to propose rules which will help them all function well within the class. When it is the children themselves who are, in effect, free to define the law and order for themselves, the rules become theirs, because they have not been imposed by others. This fact has been achieved by enlisting their advice and their cooperation. If the adult makes the rules which are imposed on the children, then the children may or may not cooperate in the adherence to the rules; may or may not accept responsibility for them. In that case, the teacher alone will be responsible for policing the laws. But, if the law and order has been arrived at through a collaboration with the children, they will view the classroom as theirs, and will assume responsibility for its care and maintenance. If a rule is breached, the children will remind the person committing the infraction of the acceptable behavior or the expectation of the group, and in this way the children become the caretakers of the class or the society.

If something of great importance has not been suggested during the discussions with the children, the teacher can very easily get it introduced for discussion by questioning its importance. She can inquire what the group thinks of such and such. Shouldn't this be considered as well, for this reason? Once it is on the table the children can discuss it, and if it is reasonable, as reasoning creatures they should have no difficulty in eventually adopting the suggestion as one of their rules.

Consistency and Sound Foundation

Once the fundamental law and order of the society has been established by the group for the group, then the expectations or the standards of behavior have been set. If these have been laid out clearly and systematically, there should be no questions about their importance and relevance. Everyone should clearly understand what his responsibility and obligation is to the group and the workings of the society. The children now have the knowledge of what the expectations are for functioning together. Accordingly, they can measure their actions and accomplishments by these expectations.

However, for this to remain a secure foundation around which the children can function, there is one more element to be considered which serves as the cornerstone to the entire structure. That crucial element is the teacher's consistency in implementing the structure. The children must be accountable to maintaining the rules, and it falls to the teacher to oversee this maintenance. Without consistency it matters not how many rules and laws have been set out and defined. If on one day the teacher expects one kind of behavior, and on a different day tolerates another, then the structure will not stand. If the laws and guidelines to which the children are responsible, and by which they evaluate their performance are inconsistent, then the children have no accurate means by which to measure their performances. More unfortunately, there will be another message implicit in these capricious expectations. The implication is that the limits of the structure can be challenged by children as the structure is not sound. They need not be responsible for successful management of their own behavior agreed on by the whole group for the good of the whole. Instead of altering their behavior to fit positively within the structure, the children will use their creative energies devising ways to work around it. When involved in this pursuit, children waste their time and energy experimenting with which rule can be breached and which cannot. By contrast, when the structure remains constant, it remains strong and provides a secure environment in which to work. The children can work within the expectations because they will always know what to expect. When these remain consistent, the expectations become the tool by which to measure their performances and around which they can develop responsibility.

Public School Curricula

In defining for the children the expectations that comprise the foundation of the workings of the class, there are some critical points which must be raised with the children relatively early. One such point is the notion of work. During the elementary years the child is presented with Cosmic Education, which, because of its appealing nature, allows for an enormous work, for the grandest work and the greatest effort, as it encompasses the vision of the whole universe. Since freedom is also granted the children, enabling them to pick those things that motivate their interest, the children are at liberty to study topics of their choosing in great depth for long periods of time. However, according to society there are certain things that must be learned above and beyond particular loves in which the children may immerse themselves. Those requirements are set down by the *public school curriculum*, and function as the limits which balance the freedom given to choose the great work. Children need to know that they are responsible for learning all that would have been expected of them had they attended traditional school. Once that has been learned the child is free to work at length in his preferred subjects. Therefore, the public school curriculum helps the child to determine for himself whether he has accomplished what society asks of its children. If the child has done what is expected, then he has measured up. If he has not done the work, he can see this clearly, too, as he undertakes to evaluate his performance.

The limits provided by the public school curriculum help the teacher **structure the freedom** for the child, and concurrently and importantly, provide him with a piece of material around which he can evaluate his progress. If he has completed in a timely manner that which is asked by society, then he is responsible to what society has asked of people his age. If he has not completed the requirements, that fact becomes evident as well. In either case the child can see for himself and judge his

own performance against the standard, that which has been asked of him.

Work Diaries or Daily Journals

The child can be offered the freedoms to choose his work and to work in groups, which includes talking with his peers, as long as he is aware of the work expectation, society's requirements, and all that for which he is responsible. To this end the child must be given a vehicle by which he can actually monitor his success at these endeavors. The vehicle that provides this opportunity is a daily journal, in which the child keeps track of his lessons, the amount of work done, and the time taken on each entry. The child's record of his actual work is the tool both he and the teacher use to assess his responsibility to the freedom given him to choose his own work, design his own schedule, work with others, while at the same time meeting the public school curriculum.

Regular Meetings with Children

This assessment occurs during the regular, individual meetings that the teacher has with each child. Since the children can reason now, they understand that the freedom granted must be proportionate to the responsibility and productivity that they demonstrate. Upon examination, if the children are consistently accountable for their work, then there is no reason to interfere with their freedom. However, if collaborative evaluation reveals that a child cannot handle responsibly the freedom given, the teacher must intercede on behalf of the welfare of the child. The teacher and child must decide together when and on what the child will work. This is the choice that confronts the child: you can do it by yourself productively, or you can do it with me.

Since the entries in the journal include details of the kind of work, the amount of work and the time it took, the child and the teacher have a clear picture of how much time he has spent on how many things. The journal is a vehicle by which he can see clearly for himself, and thus personally evaluate, exactly how he is spending his time, how much he is accomplishing; essentially, how responsible he has been to the freedom proffered him.

During the meetings the teacher must be quite clear about the process of evaluation as she reviews the child's work with him. *This is not the time for correcting the child's work.* It is a time to work with him – a shared responsibility, to enable him to evaluate and judge his own work and performance. The child must come to recognize when it is deficient and then design a method to improve it.

These meetings are the teacher's opportunity to oversee the work of the children. As the children are consciously measuring and evaluating their work, the teacher can make pertinent notes on areas requiring strengthening. In this way she can be reminded to follow through in her efforts to direct the child. Ultimately it is the teacher's responsibility to see that the children acceptably complete the work asked of them by the public school curriculum.

Finally, the children must have a means to assess the level of responsibility they show in connection with all of the freedoms they have. Since the children are now rational human beings, imbued with a period of great strength prevailing in the psychological realm as well as the physical, they can withstand hearing that they have certain deficits and areas which need improvement. This will not hurt their feelings. It is only through their being made consciously aware of their shortcomings that they can consciously make changes. By pampering these people, one deprives them of the awareness that they need in order to make necessary changes. Thus, these means are essential and must be implemented in education with each child, if each is to see for himself and then judge rationally, if he has employed his freedoms responsibly.

Conclusion

It can be seen in this examination of a system of education that gives the child freedom, but asks of him responsibility for that freedom, that it also must provide the child the means to evaluate his own performance. In conclusion, these means are the implementation of three pieces of metaphorical material: the public school curriculum, the daily journals, and the regular meetings with the teacher. Through their allied use the children develop the personal skills of assessment, appraisal, and evaluation, all abilities that will be required and useful once the child has attained adulthood. These abilities will prove valuable tools for a lifelong process of continually determining and assessing successes and failures. It is during this process that the child is actively practicing how to judge, how to weigh, how to measure, how to evaluate his performance, how to determine if he in fact has met his responsibilities. It is only through consciously identifying the successes and how they came about, that one can ensure more of them. And, it is through recognizing and acknowledging the failures that one can begin the process to remedy them.

If a child has had an opportunity to proceed through a system of education in which he has been given the freedom to develop and refine those qualities needed to be a valuable citizen, as well as given opportunities to learn how to assess his achievements and appraise his ability to be responsible, then this system of education has indeed succeeded in aiding the child's total development. It will produce responsible people who are well aware of who they are, where their talents lie, what they can contribute, and perhaps, one day even be able to "take a message to Garcia." This is exactly the kind of opportunity in education that Dr. Montessori envisioned for the elementary child.

Notes

[1] Elbert Hubbard, *A Message to Garcia and Other Essays*. Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York, 1917, p. 23.

[2] Montessori, Maria, *To Educate the Human Potential*. Kalakshetra Publications, Madras, India, 1973, p. 3.

[3] Montessori, Maria, *The Advanced Montessori Method – Volume One*. Kalakshetra Publications, Madras, India, 1965, p. 5.

[4] Ibid, p. 57.

[5] Montessori, Maria, *To Educate the Human Potential*. Kalakshetra Publications, Madras, India, 1973, p. 7.

[6] Montessori, Maria, *From Childhood to Adolescence*. Schocken Books, New York, 1973, p. 26.

[7] Ibid, p. 26.

[8] Montessori, Maria, *Child's Instinct to Work*.

[9] Montessori, Maria, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, Schocken Books, New York, 1973, p. 27.

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Adolescent Theory: *Erdkinder* Outcomes

David Kahn

Dr. Montessori envisioned the *Erdkinder* prepared environment for adolescents as a place that develops their bodies as well as their sense of social order and their expanding intellect. The prepared environment will include a "museum of machines," a produce stand, a greenhouse, a garden, natural wild spaces, a bed-and-breakfast style guest room, a farmhouse commons for student living and study space; and three barns: one for animals, one for a wood and craft area, and one to house large equipment.

While formulating the program for the farm, we recognize the need for a framework of study that emerges in direct contact with real life. Real-life experiences at the farm will be rooted in the solidity of this specific natural and human-built place for the young adolescent: "...the exploration is even wider [than in the elementary], encompassing the farm and the community of the rural area. It echoes what the children explored at the second plane [elementary years]: civilization and how it came about. But now the exploration takes place in reality because the adolescents are actually doing it. Cooperation with the land, cooperation in commerce, and cooperation in the cultural life of the rural society touch materially the things studied in the second plane and afford the adolescent the opportunity to see his or her place in society." (Margaret Stephenson, cited in *The Adolescent Colloquium*, p. 35)

The "program for study and work" grows out of the farm "prepared environment" concept. Although the social, moral, intellectual and emotional dimensions of the adolescent are fully integrated into living as a farm community, the following separate discussions around each dimension are for the sake of finding common ground with developmental psychology outside of Montessori education.

Social Dimension

The Socially Prepared Environment

Montessori calls her "essential reform" a "school of experience in the elements of social life." (p. 107) First and foremost, work and study is based on economic and social understandings suggested by both David Orr and David Hutchinson in their descriptions of the educational value of place.

Orr emphasizes the need for integrating education with nature and with community: "The idea that place could be a significant educational tool was proposed by John Dewey in an 1897 essay. Dewey proposed that we 'make each of our schools an embryonic community ... with types of occupations that reflect the life of the larger society.' He intended to broaden the focus of education, which he regarded as too 'highly specialized, one-sided, and narrow.' The school, its relations with the larger community and all of its internal functions, Dewey proposed to remake into curriculum." (p. 127)

David Hutchison underscores Orr's principles with what he calls "the spirit of place": "To know one's place is to have an intimate knowledge of the local environment (both natural and built) and the various professional roles, shared histories, and interdependent relationships that sustain the community over the long term. To further strengthen children's ties to the local community, their participation in community projects that help to nurture culturally significant relationships between young and old can be fostered by way of apprenticeship-style programs and community renewal efforts that arise within ecologically sustainable contexts." (p. 129)

Place is defined by its limits; it is immediate and on a small scale: a building, a neighborhood, a hundred acres easily walked across in a day. Place is where we live – a source for food, water, energy, materials, friends, and recreation. Place in a diminished sense is real estate, but the *Erdkinder* definition of place refers to the larger economic, ecological, social, political, and spiritual elements of the immediate surroundings. Place is a community to which the adolescent feels he or she both belongs and contributes.

Occupations or Work as Social Activity

Occupations are the point of engagement for the adolescent on the land. They are a source of meaningful work, work that will be valued by the community itself, work that challenges both the mind and the body, work that is recognized as legitimate by the culture, work that has economic validity, work that is made noble by being done with integrity and passion. Engagement leads to a sense of ownership and stewardship.

The specific nature and purpose of an occupation may inspire a student to commit to the occupation not as part of a vague choice for the moment, but with spurts of passion about what needs to be done as part of belonging to a community. As an individual thus begins to develop a specific interest and expertise in an occupation, community recognition of the individual's contribution usually follows. The adolescent's resulting sense of pride and accomplishment matures the occupation into a role.

The transition from occupation to role is subtle. The student, in effect, tries on the role, becomes immersed in the knowledge and the process of a specific calling: "I am the sugar bush builder, I am the videographer, I am the beekeeper, I am the bookkeeper." Being an interdependent part of a concrete venture, learning how to interact in order to cooperate freely, trying on different occupations and roles matures young people and makes them useful in their own eyes.

Looking to the economic self-sufficiency of the adolescent farm community, Montessori highlights economic independence as "the general principle of social education for adolescents." (p. 104) She speaks of the "wide social connotations of productiveness and earning power." (p. 106) She remarks that, "If the produce can be used commercially this brings in the fundamental mechanism of society, that of production and exchange, on which economic life is based." (p. 107)

Most importantly on the farm, the work role will function for the greater good. The adolescent's desires, emotions, and attachments are tied up with the whole community – the work is

connected with the social enterprise of the farm. Social aims convert an occupation into a role. Assuming a role in something implies that the occupation touches or engages a person and transforms that person, elevates that person's aims in life, validates the self, centers the personality, and adds impetus to learning. The adolescent's interest evolves into a "community task," where the student sees the work as essential to the whole. A higher socialization occurs, which is able to translate the experienced roles on the farm into a view of the collective role of humanity: the "cosmic task" of the individual and of humanity in general. The adolescent is a "social newborn" which means that the adolescent is "a new born member of adult society, a new born participant in adult society"; he or she is newly born as one who can "take an active part in society's productive labours or in regulation of its organisation." (Grazzini p. 136)

Social outcomes for the early adolescent stage of life include:

- what it means to make a contribution
- interdependency and the need to cooperate with adults, peers, and the natural world
- work roles and their social and cosmic meaning
- adaptability to a variety of work
- demands for the sake of others
- work judged as a product of life, in direct relation to life
- economic independence and interdependence
- individual initiative in relation to group goals

Moral Dimension

Montessori points out that "the observation of nature has not only a side that is philosophical and scientific, it has a side of social experiences that leads on to the observations of civilization and the life of men." (p. 106)

A social spirit and moral conduct permeate the developing *Erdkinder*. Social perception is enhanced through shared experience of common activities. In order to function as an interdependent whole, basic information needs to be exchanged, tasks need to be recorded, and skills need to be imparted to the next members of the community who come along.

All occupations on the farm give rise to communication and cooperation with an underlying perception of connection to the greater good. Companionship is ongoing; relationships to the neighbors and neighboring community are part of the social fabric of the *Erdkinder* community. Every member of the *Erdkinder* community is a learning member of an ongoing moral concern – day and night. The learning is to be shared and reflected upon, and the educational plan includes a formal place for this sharing and reflection. The fullest examination of social roles leads to an understanding of right and wrong actions in relation to work, study, the environment and social responsibilities.

Emerging out of these maturing roles on the farm is the "more dynamic training of character and development of a clearer consciousness of social reality." (Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 100) Adolescent psychological characteristics described by Montessori include "a state of expectation, a tendency towards creative work and a need for strengthening of self-confidence." (p. 101) She further ascribes to adolescents a "sensitive period when there should develop the most noble characteristics that would prepare a man to be social, that is to say, a sense of justice and a sense of personal dignity." The occupations and roles on the land provide "an exercise of 'utilized virtues,' of 'super-values' and skills acquired beyond the limits of one's own particular specialization, past or future." (p. 103) Thus, it is through the occupations and roles on the land that "valorization" of personality takes place; the students feel valued because they are making a tangible contribution. The individual student succeeds in a task by very personal effort with a sense of accomplishment rising out of the work completed and the economic benefits therein.

The philosophical adolescent mind, which has already experienced the great stories of evolution in the Montessori elementary program, can easily intuit that humans must all choose a way of life and ecological identity compatible with the rest of biological existence – past, present, and future. The Montessori adolescent has already well understood the philosophical arrangement of events in the history of humanity and how they configure in human, geological, and cosmic terms. Human consciousness strives to understand human progress in evolutionary terms. Simply stated, the adolescent must know where humanity has come from and where humanity is going, especially in light of the well-being of the planet. This is not to make the *Erdkinder* community a place for ecological politics. Rather, the ethic of the land and its destiny is deeply personal, touching at some unconscious level the will to live and to provide for future generations. The ethic of the land and its preservation is a life principle, calling to work of the mind and heart to make sense of the world and what is most valued.

Looking at history from the philosophical standpoint of our real relationship to the natural world as lived on the farm, with the right use of water and land, plants and animals, air and energy, brings history into focus with the world's present environmental questions and with the adolescent's inner sense of balance. These are moral considerations. Points of comparison with the past around questions of environment will transform history from a mere logic and sequence of events to a search for answers to the moral questions about survival; about living on a planet with limited resources; about planning lifestyles that will adapt to the scarcity of resources. History thus makes humans wiser about how they will live, both present and future. When history interfaces with formative adolescent thinking about what life will bring, it can be an inexhaustible source of motivation, identity, vocation and morality.

Moral outcomes for the early adolescent stage of life include:

- respect for others and their roles
- the nobility of work and adult-like responsibilities
- right use of the natural environment while meeting human needs
- freedom to act on individual initiative; to commit to freely chosen work
- group progress and individual progress resulting in a happy life that contributes to others
- mission orientation to the univer-

sal needs of humanity
- what makes for a virtuous life, super values which are humanitarian and for a better world
- conscience is exercised by community values and responsible dialogue
- a sense of spiritual balance

Cognitive Dimension
Place, Study and Work

Montessori wrote that "It is impossible to fix a priori a detailed program for study and work. We can only give the general plan. This is because a program should only be drawn up gradually under the guidance of experience." (*From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 111) Therefore, it is sometimes necessary to draw on the experience of contemporary environmentalists, such as David Orr and others providing insight and some specific techniques for using the natural environment and its occupations, to generate options for study moving toward motivated academic projects evolved by community process. Dr. Orr refers to study of place: "The classroom and indoor laboratory are ideal environments in which to narrow reality in order to focus on bits and pieces. The study of place, by contrast, enables us to widen the focus to examine the interrelationships between disciplines and to lengthen our perception of time." (p. 129)

Study of place refers to living space framed by the interdependent "cosmic agents" – land, water, air, energy, plants and animals, and humans. The interdependencies learned in Montessori elementary take on a new sense of reality when experienced in the *Erdkinder* environment. The adolescent has the ability to abstract place – to perceive all at once its ecological and cultural features, its history, its present functioning, its related literacy, its convergent meanings, its future possibilities. When exploring place, the adolescent examines the natural data of the community – the flora and fauna, the archives of the region, the architectural remnants of its settlement period, its diverse communities, each with respective unfolding histories, etc.

But it is not until the student actually takes on real life occupations that the cognitive process integrated with social, moral, and emotional really comes together. Occupations not only fulfill the adolescent's need to belong and be valued, but they also provide the motivation for academic study: "... work on the land is an introduction both to nature and to civilization and gives a limitless field for scientific and historic studies. ...there is an opportunity to learn both academically and through actual experience what are the elements of social life." (Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 107)

An occupation leads naturally to a search for contextual knowledge (academic study).

An occupation provides direct experience, which is by nature urgent, intimate, and engaging. It contrasts with symbolic experience, which can be remote, detached, and even beyond the comprehension of the adolescent. (Note the similarity to an exercise of practical life in the *casa*.)

An occupation is limited in nature. The contextual knowledge to which it leads has concrete boundaries (like the Montessori materials), keeping work and study always in relation to the surrounding environment and the specifics of the occupation.

Within these limits, the occupation demands knowledge, which may involve measurement, refinement of the senses, precision, coordination, research, and, finally, expression in oral or written form. The knowledge demanded is rigorous and, if incomplete, means that the occupation cannot be fully engaging, understood, integrated into the surrounding whole, or even completed.

One can use web of life (interdependencies) as a cognitive structure. When one structures occupations around different interdependent parts of the nature, a whole interdisciplinary science study emerges which is required to inform those occupations. Following are a few examples.

- Work with the soil introduces both geological and biological studies. The biological applies to the teeming life in the soil. The geological aspect extends to soil's mineral content.
- Work with water suggests studies related to the origin of life and to earth's history. It is studied for its physical and chemical properties relevant to farming.
- Air is studied for its role in earth's climate and in plant and animal life cycles.
- Energy is studied as a comprehensive force that begins with the *Big Bang* and has global implications as a universal human need. It can be viewed from the standpoint of alternative technology for the production of energy available to the farm.
- Animals and plants are studied for their role in natural ecosystems and for their relationship to humans in agricultural science, food processing and distribution, domestication, and the history of civilization.
- The human organism is studied for its collaboration with the cosmic agents and its building of human systems that are compatible with the systems found in the natural world.

The knowledge demanded for a project based, experience based kind of learning is not a subject to be covered, but rather knowledge to be applied for the greater good of operating *Erdkinder* through the work of a common enterprise. Thus, the occupation's roots in meaningful work extend to the related contextual study, providing motivation for becoming the "expert" around your occupation, infusing academic work with purpose and meaning.

Montessori's Educational Syllabus

Montessori's "Educational Syllabus" is not a mere subject list. She describes knowledge in psychological terms such as "opening up ways of expression," addressing the "'formative forces' in the evolution of the soul of man," or making the "individual a part of ... civilization." (p. 115)

Montessori divides the "Educational Syllabus" into three parts (pp. 115-119). The first, "opportunities for self-expression," encompasses artistic, linguistic, and imaginative activities – music, language, and art. Next is "the 'formative' education that will construct firm foundations for the character," consisting of moral education, mathematics, and languages. Finally, "general education" is presented as "the preparation for adult life," encompassing three divisions of history: "the study of the earth and of living things"

pertains to natural history (already discussed in relation to land-based occupations); "the study of human progress and the building up of civilization" refers to the history of human achievement and technology; and, finally, "the study of the history of mankind" encompasses the physical and intellectual range of human activities: migrations, exploration, human settlement, government, and civics. Closer examination of these divisions of history suggests a myriad of intellectual studies.

Cognitive outcomes for the early adolescent stage of life include:

- to integrate personal expression with a variety of artistic, speaking, musical and media modalities in direct relation to occupations and role development within the community;
- to enter into the questions of nature and cosmos with full understanding of mathematics in direct connection to the practical needs of the farm environment as well as analyzing scientific causes of the natural world and extensions into the universe;
- to learn a variety of languages and about language in order to penetrate different cultures and improve human understanding;
- to connect the history of life on earth and its civilizations with the principles of personal and social evolution of a human community;
- to see the whole of history, the future destiny of humans, and experience and reflect on the individual contribution one makes to the creative direction of the future. ■

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The Role of the Teacher and the Role of the Assistant

Annette Haines, Ed.D.

Introduction

Someone asked a famous conductor of a great symphony orchestra which instrument he considered the most difficult to play. The conductor thought a moment, then said, *"Second fiddle.* I can get plenty of first violinists. But to find one who can play second fiddle with enthusiasm – that's a problem. And if we have no second fiddles, we have no harmony."

Montessori was clear that only one trained director/ress was needed in the Children's House. She believed that too many "teachers" compromised the children's development of independence.

Children do not need, nor do they ultimately benefit from, constant presenting of materials. In our anxiety to be good directresses, we can easily fall into over-teaching the children. Dr. Montessori protected us and the children from this trap by stipulating one directress for twenty-five or more children. (Lillard, 1991)

However most schools are required by law to have a much lower adult/child ratio. The solution has been to hire someone as a classroom assistant. This individual's role is clearly a subordinate one, and yet one which is terribly important; a second adult in a room can make or break the classroom. The trained directress has spent a minimum of nine months learning her art – some have spent two or three years. Yet schools put assistants into classrooms with little or no training and expect them to learn by some kind of osmosis. Naturally, these individuals often develop behavior patterns that hinder rather than help.

In far too many classes the aide becomes a kind of floor-walker, hovering over the children. Her activities may include tidying up before, during and after a child's work; interrupting to praise, correct, or socialize; giving lessons; reminding and cajoling, disciplining and controlling; and doing for the child. The overactive aide is an obstacle to independence. (Hughes, 1990, p. 39)

The result is often more discordant than harmonious.

Yet what *does* the assistant do? This paper hopes to offer some insight into this question from both a practical and a theoretical perspective.

* * *

The mind of the young child is very different from our own. Starting from nothing, the baby absorbs impressions from his environment and incorporates them (Montessori said *incarnates* them) into his very being. These impressions are indelible. They are permanent. And they make up the personality of the future man or woman this little baby is becoming. All of us were children once. Our feelings, our attitudes, our abilities, our self-esteem all stem from events of childhood – remembered, or not. Montessori said that the child has an *absorbent mind*. The child, she said, has a mind able to absorb knowledge: to take it in like a sponge. Each has the power to teach him-or-herself.

Even though the baby is not yet conscious, having no ego or memory or will, he is born with the power to absorb impressions from the environment which are never forgotten. Think about language. The *mother tongue* is absorbed by the unconscious mind and becomes a permanent acquisition. You will speak the way your mother spoke. A Japanese child will learn Japanese, an Indian child will learn an Indian dialect, and an African will learn an African language. Social, racial, cultural and religious idiosyncrasies are similarly absorbed unconsciously from the young child's environment and become a part of him which can never be completely erased. *Climate, country, homeland, they are in our blood*, so to speak.

The young child also has incredible energy. Montessori called it the *horme* – the *elan vitale* or vital force that pushes the child towards activity. The newborn begins to move, raise its head, struggle to sit up, to crawl, and so forth, and this impulse towards activity persists throughout the child's early years. And it is not random activity, but movement guided to specific ends, to make uniquely human acquisitions. So we see that of all the sounds which the baby hears, the sounds that attract him most, are those of human language. It is not the movement of the trees, the birds, or the automobiles which babies struggle to achieve, but those specifically human movements that will help them construct the adults they are growing to be.

Walt Whitman encapsulated this when he wrote:

There was a child went forth every day,
and the first object he looked upon and received with wonder or pity or love or dread,
that object he became,

And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day....or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

It is because of this, because little children become what they experience in their environment, because they take it all in – the good and the bad – and make it a part of their very being, it is because of this that we must, as Montessori says, *give the best to the smallest*.

But how exactly do we do that? And more specifically, what is the role of the assistant in a Children's House? How can the assistant be that invaluable aide that every directress dreams of? How can he or she be an active help to the children during their formative period and, as Montessori suggests, be *an aid to life*?

The Assistant's Role in Regards to the Environment

Dr. Montessori, from her extensive observation of children, not only realized the peculiarly absorbent nature of the child's mind, but recognized that little children had the same *universal tendencies* as all human beings, regardless of age.

With these principles as guidelines, she prepared a special environment for the young child, a secure world where the child could reach optimal psychological or mental development, just as he or she had reached physical completeness in their mother's womb.

This environment must protect the children from all obstacles to growth. It must be full of purposeful activities, stimulating mental and physical involvement, and rich in learning expe-

THE CHILD FROM BIRTH TO SIX YEARS

UNIVERSAL HUMAN TENDENCIES: those manifestations of the spirit of mankind which are basic to all humanity, i.e., the marks of the Human Race.

THE HUMAN BEING

Exploration – the need to find out about and experience the world
Orientation – the need to place oneself in relation to one's environment
Order – the need to classify and organize everything so that one may fully act on the environment
Abstraction – the need to create extensions of self in order to transform the environment; the ability to imagine or create an idea in the mind
Exactitude – the need for precision and exactness; to explain one's environment in an orderly, precise manner (the mathematical mind)
Activity – the need to work; to use one's hands; to manipulate the environment
Self-perfection – the need to satisfy inner needs; to repeat an activity until it becomes part of the developing personality
Language – the need to communicate with others; to transmit experiences from one generation to another
Spiritual life – the need to explore that which was not visible to the eye; to explain that which we cannot—the need for customs, ideals, culture, emotions

THE YOUNG CHILD

Exploration – the infant and toddler must experience her environment through her senses—she must go out into her world to learn what is in it
Orientation – the young child must place herself in relation to the objects, persons and phenomenon in her world
Order – to gain a sense of security; as she places herself in relation to her environment, the child has a great need for stability and order within that world; therefore she does not like changes during the early years
Abstraction – the young child begins to abstract when she hears her mother's voice in another room and recognizes it as hers; the toddler abstracts when she hears the word "tree" and can envision a tree in her mind
Exactitude – the young child has the need to see activities in exact sequence; to work in exact ways so that she may form in her mind logical and reasonable patterns of thinking
Activity – the young child must be active in order to adapt to her environment and learn to live within it; her exploration and orientation must take place through activity – especially through the use of her hands
Self-perfection – the young child has an insatiable thirst for the language of her environment; this enables her to express her needs and ideas to others
Spiritual life – the young child needs to be included in the life of her culture so that she may become a part of it

riences for their absorbent minds. The aim of the prepared environment is to be a help to life, to assist young children in their work of adaptation and self-construction and thereby allow them to evolve into integrated personalities, developed as fully as their potential and inherited traits permit.

First, and perhaps most important, is the Practical Life area. Working with these initial exercises, the children learn to adapt to their new social environment. They gain self-confidence as they learn to take care of themselves, learn control over their body movements and begin to construct their mental faculties as they concentrate on sequenced tasks. They develop logical thought patterns as they follow through from beginning to middle to end of each exercise. They develop manual skills and physical dexterity that they will use later in the more advanced areas of Mathematics and Language. The keynote of the Practical Life area is purposeful activity, and the result is what we call "normalized" children, children free of any deviations that could impede their growth, children who can control their impulses and concentrate on the task at hand.

Second after Practical Life is the Sensorial area of the Prepared Environment. Here children become aware of their senses and refine them through repeated use, exploring relationships and qualities of the physical world. They form concepts and learn to choose and make judgments, to observe and compare.

In the Math area, children work with concrete representations of mathematical concepts, gradually moving towards an internalization of abstract math facts without confusion, fear, or boredom. The Language area provides the children with the tools of communication and the language, which is their cultural heritage, along with an appreciation for the physical world and the natural order of the plant and animal kingdom.

So the first thing the assistant can do is help with the **preparation of the environment.** Usually a week or so before the children return in the fall, the director/ress and aide return to the classroom. There is much to be done to get ready for school.

- There is sewing to be done: polishing cloths, aprons, chain mats and runners, blindfolds, just to name some of the projects which an assistant (together with fabric and a sewing machine) could create.
- Materials for mathematics and language need to be created: classified card material; chain tickets, memory game slips, math operation tickets for the charts, etc. are examples of the materials which need to be made. An assistant, with a little direction, some card stock and a laminating machine (or a little petty cash for the local print shop with laminating abilities) can be an absolute hero or heroine!
- Exercises need to be set up. Smelling bottles and tasting jars can be taken home and filled. The assistant can be instructed on the art and science of filling the thermic bottles at a moment's notice so this fun activity can get out of the closet.
- And repairs need to be made: paint touch-ups on wooden materials, gluing knobs, trimming threads, and so forth; the bow frame can be taken home and its ribbons hand washed and ironed and repairs can be made on the other frames such as snaps and buttons. Special touches can be added – little embellishments added or refreshed to make boxes and baskets more ap-

pealing and attractive.

The week before school is the time to get everything in order. Are there 55 counters, 45 spindles, 81 green beads and 100 red ones? With a little direction, there is much the assistant can do to see that the school year gets off on a positive note.

As the days and weeks of the school year progress, the aide can help to **maintain the environment**. Things run down daily and yet each morning everything must be back, all in order, everything in its place. Every day, once again, the environment must tangibly demonstrate the level of perfection possible. Each new day represents a fresh start...an unspoken challenge: "Today, can I return it to the shelf the way I found it (and the way I found it was *beautiful*)?

- Regular deep cleaning needs to be done, perhaps washing one shelf a day will get the job done.
- Also, on a daily basis, all the shelves must be checked. In the half-hour before school, the directress and aide together must work quickly to replenish all the supplies...to make sure there is paste in the paste jars, polish in the polishing bottles, paper towels and paper for metal inset work (all cut to the right size), soap in the soap dish, etc. Clean, dry laundry needs to be neatly folded and put away, plants watered, objects dusted, and the little soap dishes cleaned so that they are dry and sparkling. Working together in the early morning, the pair creates solidarity. This teamwork, this collaboration, will be essential in the hours when the children are present.

In many classrooms the assistant is relegated to the Practical Life area. Yet there is much that needs to be done in the other areas of the classroom.

- In the Sensorial area, for example, the assistant can prepare the sensitizing trays with warm water in the morning and empty them out at the end of the day. Also, they can check the sequence of the geometric cabinet drawers and cards, check the bells to see they are in order, and see that the little grains of the discrimination exercises are neatly in their little dishes.
- In the Language area there are pencils to be sharpened, paper to be cut, moveable alphabet boxes to be dusted and letters aligned each day, and classified card material to be put in order, each class of pictures neatly rubber-banded together with the *key picture* on the top. The teacher's tray can be checked to see that there is a little supply of blank slips of paper, a red pencil, a lead pencil and a pair of scissors.
- In the Mathematics area, the chains and tickets of the bead cabinet often need tending, the paper supplies for the Work Charts need refilling, the pencils need sharpening, and the decimal system cards often need ordering.

To really give *the best to the smallest*, there is enough work to be done that both directress and aide can be busily employed each day – before school and in the afternoon when the children have departed. Yet all this work must be relegated to periods when the children are not there. *Why?* Because it is really the children that need to be active in this environment, not the adults. The environment is a construct which we provide as a motive for the child's activity. If the adults are viewed as servants (or as surrogate mothers, perhaps) – ever ready and willing to do their work for them – the children will not be easily persuaded that it is their house and they will never begin to work on it profoundly.

The Assistant's Role in Regard to the Children

Observe

One of the most important roles of the assistant is that of a second pair of eyes. The assistant should sit quietly in a chair when not needed, keeping a notepad and pencil on his or her lap. They can take note of the children's work, noting what child is working with what activity and for how long. The children's behavior can be observed and documented, taking care to record the frequency, the duration, and the time of specific incidences. This record serves two purposes: 1) it provides necessary objective and quantitative data for lesson planning and decision-making and 2) it documents the life of the class for record-keeping purposes.

Montessori reminds us, children want to do something useful. Useless play without meaning does not appeal to them; "Neither do so many of the tasks set for children in...school. That is why children are rebellious and naughty. I answer only that there are no bad children. What seems like caprice is only rebellion against the denial...of their desire for a natural environment...If the children are allowed free development and given occupations that correspond with their unfolding minds, their natural goodness will shine forth." (Montessori, 1912 address at Carnegie Hall)

This is why the directress is so protective of the child's work. It is through *work*, when movement works hand in hand with the mind, that the young child's mind comes into contact with external reality. This *work* leads to an integration of the personality.

Children's work is vital for their growth. They must have the responsibility for their classroom because purposeful work is a means of development. Young children have a natural instinct for work and are happiest when allowed to put their energy to good use.

Unlike adults, who work to create some change in their environment, little children work to create a change in *themselves*. They work to grow. Like the woman practicing her tennis serve, the little girl repeats her movements over and over again, expending a lot of energy without seeming to accomplish very much. Like the man working at his golf swing, the little boy washes a table over and over again . . . not to get the table clean, but to gain increased control over his muscles. He practices coordination of the mind and hand. He learns to work in a sequential way, and develops his ability to work independently. Self-discipline grows as the children focus their energy on useful tasks. Self-confidence increases as they master new skills.

When children begin to concentrate on an activity (and it doesn't matter which activity it is!) a beneficial change begins to take place deep within them. If the children are able to repeatedly experience such periods of spon-

taneous concentration, they will begin to exhibit the characteristics of what Dr. Montessori called *normality*.

Dr. Montessori said that she discovered the secret of childhood when she observed the first little ragamuffins in the San Lorenzo quarter of Rome in the first *Casa dei Bambini*. She, like all of us, had some preconceived notions about what children were like. We think of children as having certain "childish" qualities – a love of play, a delight in fantasy, a quicksilver personality which darts from one thing to another, and so forth. What she found happening in the slums of San Lorenzo, however, was alien to all the long-standing beliefs about children. She compared herself to Columbus discovering a New World. She discovered, she said, the *new child*.

Children who are *normalized* universally exhibit certain behaviors: they have a love of order, a love of work, a profound spontaneous concentration, an attachment to reality, a love of silence and working alone, a generosity, and the ability to make good choices. They are cheerfully obedient, independent, cooperative and helpful. They display initiative, self-discipline, and joy.

These characteristics are certainly not those generally ascribed to childhood. But the vision of the new child is seen daily in Montessori classrooms throughout the world. Our work demands that we have faith in the child. Many of the children in our classes today are like geodes, rough on the outside yet containing marvelous beauty within. We must remember that within each child is a treasure, and learn to observe carefully, objectively, and not jump to hasty conclusions.

Montessori discovered the secret of childhood through her observations. The trained directress has spent many hours learning how to do scientific observation; but the assistant can observe too...and share what they have seen. They may see things from the lunchroom, the bus queue or the playground, which can round-out the profile.

Assist the Development of Independence

Virginia Jensen tells the story of *Sarah and the Door*. Sarah is a little girl who is left alone in the house. Her coat gets caught in the door and she panics. She struggles with the buttons violently until she comes up with a good idea...if she turns each button just right, it will slip through the buttonhole. All's well that ends well and the last page of the book shows Sarah with a smug little smile. Ms. Jensen concludes: "All in all, for Sarah, it was a pretty good day."

I used to work as a secretary in a church-basement Montessori school. They put my desk out in the hall, right by the bathroom (which actually was a pretty good idea). I would watch the bathroom door and the littlest children would struggle with the heavy door. I learned to say, "Pull! Pull hard!" The children would beam with satisfaction when they had *conquered the door*.

Montessori suggests that it is the "energy of creative life which urges the child on, which obliges him to do all these things." (1946, p. 67) The adult does best to let the small child do things for himself – in collaboration with nature – although it is very hard for an adult to stand by and watch a tiny child struggle to open a heavy door or climb a stair. Once children begin to coordinate their movements, they perfect themselves through practice. We see this in the baby who, with great difficulty, has reached the top of the stairs but cries to be placed at the bottom so they can repeat their noble efforts.

Think how hard it is to stand back and let children pour their juice, tie their shoes or zip their coats. It is so much easier to jump in and do it for them. "We are so much quicker." "We won't spill." "We can do it easily." Yet Montessori reminds us of the rich man who has many servants. He is, she said, actually *poor* because he is dependent on others: he does not even know how to dress or feed himself. This example may be obsolete because today most people don't have servants. However we still encounter older men who have grown so dependent on their wives that if the wife gets sick or dies, the man cannot care for himself at all! How much better it would have been if the wife had shown him how to cook a meal, how to wash his clothes or mend his jacket. Unnecessary help, Montessori says, is an obstacle to development.

Of course, we cannot let the child stand outside a bathroom door just because it is too heavy. We must evaluate the level of frustration and decide when it would be prudent to intervene. First, wait and see. Stand back and say to yourself, "not yet." When real help is needed, offer that help. But just a little help, and always mixed with encouragement. As I did with the heavy door: "You can do it. Pull. Pull hard."

Maintain a High Level of Environmental Order

Another important idea Maria Montessori gives us is the idea of *sensitive periods*. A sensitive period is a transitory unit of time, during which the child is guided by inner sensibilities towards particular facets of his or her environment which will aid in the acquisition of specific traits. Once the child has acquired the mental construction peculiar to that sensitive period, the sensitivity departs...to be replaced by another, and then another, throughout the years of early childhood.

When a child is in a sensitivity period, it is as if the child were "in love" with certain things. The sensitivity acts as a kind of spotlight, which focuses on one thing while leaving the child indifferent to another. Thus, in this period of unconscious construction, the sensitive periods *choose* what the child needs for development, whereas later the conscious intellect, or will, assumes the task of selecting where the child's attention will settle. When a sensitive period focuses the child's energies towards one aspect of the environment, the absorbent mind assimilates the peculiar knowledge or characteristic associated with that aspect rapidly and brilliantly.

Sensitive periods occur at specific ages and are limited in duration. They can be seen as *windows of opportunity* where the mind is prepared to accept and digest a new piece of information; when, as it were, the doors of perception are open. When the child achieves this state, when the door into its mind is open, if nobody is prepared to help or is ready to listen, the door may swing shut, possibly never to open again. But if someone is present, ready and prepared at all times, then the moments will be caught, the step made. Then the process of learning will be easy and free from strain. "...if the cup of learning – in the broadest sense – is constantly proffered when the child is thirsty, it

will drink." (Deakin, 1971, p. 42)

One of the most important sensitivities is the sensitive period for order. It is easily observable in young children beginning around the age of eighteen months and continuing with great intensity during the child's third year of life. This sensitivity explains many of the so-called tantrums of this stormy period. At this time, young children have an urgent need for order in their environment. They are trying to make sense out of the many sensations which bombard them. If the order of their world is upset in any way, it greatly disturbs their sense of security. According to Dr. Montessori, "Plainly the child's love of order is something more than what the adult means by the words. It is a vital need at a certain age, in which disorder is painful and is felt as a wound in the depths of the soul, so that the child might say, 'I cannot live unless I have order about me.' It is indeed a question of life and death. For the grown-up it is only a question of external pleasure, of a more or less indifferent comfort. But the child makes himself out of the elements of his environment, and this self-making is not accomplished by some vague formula, but following a precise and definite guidance." (Montessori, 1936/1983, p. 52)

Many examples of this need for order are sited by Dr. Montessori in her books, stories of children who became terribly upset when things were not in their proper places (and every mother has stories of her own to tell).

The intensity of this period wanes a bit after the third year and at this time it can have great educational value in the classroom. Thirty children could not be allowed to choose their own work and co-exist in a classroom unless children had this basic need for order. It is this need which makes the young child delight in putting everything in its proper place on the shelf. The Montessori environment, with its order, and levels of order down to the tiniest detail, is very reassuring to the young child because it fulfills this need.

Defend Children's Rights/Protect Concentration

When children are in a sensitive period, they are irresistibly drawn to certain activities, they return to the same elements of the environment again and again, and become passionately interested, concentrated, in their work. If concentration, as we have said, is the key to normalization, we must **protect the child who is concentrating**. The directress and the assistant can keep a diligent watch so that a child who is absorbed in work is not disturbed by one of his or her friends.

So what about those little children who are in *chaos*? What do we do with the children whose attention is so short that they flit from table to table, teasing and disturbing everyone, those children who fantasize with the Red Rods or the Color Tablets once they can be persuaded to get out some piece of apparatus? These children need to be connected to some activity that engages their interest. Often it helps to re-direct their energies to the environment and its care. They can be asked to push the chairs under the tables *without making a sound*. They can be asked to roll the rugs up *nicely and tightly*, to take water to the guinea hen in the yard or sweep the front walk. Also they might want to:

Practical Life
- change water in vases
- fold laundry
- water plants
- trim threads on cloths

Sensorial
- wash tasting cups/spoons
- check the order of the bells
- align the decanomial in its box
- prepare the sensitization tray(s)

Language
- rotate objects in boxes
- sharpen pencils
- straighten the moveable alphabet letters
- rubber-band the classified card material

Mathematics
- dust the chains
- organize the Golden Bead material
- fix the stamps in the Stamp Game boxes
- or double-check the bead quantities

It goes without saying that if the assistant is to re-direct children to the above kinds of activities, he or she needs to know what exactly is expected by the classroom directress. Also, if the directress will supply the assistant with a list of the presentations each child has had, the assistant can more effectively offer suggestions for work.

Aid Repetition

Often, we ask children "Are you done?" when a child is fiddling around with a piece of material. This implies that it is time to put the work away and discourages the necessary repetition. Instead, if a child has seemingly lost interest in an activity you may be able to re-focus them on the task at hand by simply saying, *"Do it again!"* Or use a leading question such as "Do they feel the same?" (i.e., the Touch Tablets) or "Which one comes next?" (i.e., the Pink Tower).

In Language and Mathematics the assistant may be able to refer the child to a control card or chart. However, once again, it falls upon the directress to enlighten the assistant as to what language or control is appropriate with each piece of material. Re-directing and re-focusing techniques are not to be used with children who are concentrating; they *are* useful, however, as diversionary tactics to protect working children from being distracted by the noisy and disruptive children in the class.

Soften Voice and Control Movement

The assistant should have a place to be when not needed, usually a chair to sit in an out-of-the-way place. All conversation should be kept at a low level and one-on-one, never from across the room. If there is a need to talk to a child, the adult should get up and slowly move to within a 12 inch, or conversational, distance and communicate at the child's eye-level. Even-mannered, pleasant tones are necessary so as not to frighten children when redirection is necessary. Other suggestions regarding voice and movement include:

- Avoiding "shhhh" to quiet the children
- Using exact words
- Not reacting verbally (or non-verbally) to dropped items, broken glasses, spilled water, etc.
- Avoiding reprimands
- Moving gracefully, slowly, and carefully
- Never stepping on floor mats

- Remembering that the adult's body movements act as a model for the children

Young children, as we all know, have a great urge to move and, in fact, perfect their body coordination through this continued practice. Not only do they enjoy moving – as every mother knows – they enjoy activities that help them *refine* their movements. They will put great effort into such things as walking on a line, rolling a rug, carrying a chair, and opening and shutting a door. The joy (and seriousness) on the faces of children participating in a Silence Game can only be explained by a kind of inborn sensitivity or inner instinct towards perfection.

Model Grace and Courtesy

Even now I can remember the embarrassment I felt when my mother said, "Tell the lady 'thank you,'" as a large woman loomed over the cash register and handed me a piece of candy in the neighborhood grocery store. I must have been about three years old. And of I course I knew I should say "thank you" to the lady, but suddenly I wasn't at all in the mood. Instead I remember being red-faced and angry. Later, as a young mother myself, I would find myself doing the same thing, insisting that my children say "I'm sorry." Well, when one sister pinched the other in the back seat of our station wagon, she didn't feel sorry. My correcting just increased her stubborn refusal. Once again, adult and child had locked horns in an age-old conflict.

It is an unnecessary battle. Dr. Montessori observed that young children have a profound sense of personal dignity. Confrontations like these occur when adults forget that children are people whose tender feelings can easily be wounded by a careless remark. If we as adults brusquely interfere when we observe a social error or commission, the child's first reaction will be a defensive one. No self-respecting person likes to be corrected, certainly not publicly. Instead (granted there is no real emergency, e.g., someone being punched, kicked or bitten), we can make a mental note that the child has not known what to do. Later at an emotionally neutral time, the director/ress can give a special lesson of Grace and Courtesy.

The name may sound a bit quaint, but the notion is certainly timeless. Such lessons should be an integral part of the daily life of the Montessori class. For example, early in the school year, the young children learn "how to shake hands." Other lessons focus on the child's movements (grace) in walking around a mat, opening a door, and carrying trays, baskets and buckets. Through these little lessons, the children learn respect for others and at the same time gain independence. The lessons of grace and courtesy are given in small groups and involve role play at an emotionally neutral time. Montessori felt that early childhood was the age for learning good manners; knowing what to do in a given social context boosts a child's self-confidence.

Little courtesies, the *please's*, *thank you's*, the *I'm sorry's* and the *excuse me's*, lubricate the movement of social life in a group.

This knowledge is presented in a pleasant and non-threatening way and in little steps. But whether or when this knowledge is used depends upon the child. The director/ress may gently remind a child of a particular courtesy, but will not insist on it. The impulse to act must come from within the child.

At arrival and dismissal time, the director/ress gives the child the opportunity to shake her hand and thereby practice this newly-acquired skill, but will not press the issue if the child is not yet ready to attempt it. The trained adult knows that one day, after weeks (or months) of watching the older children, the young child will slowly offer a hand in greeting– a silent affirmation of new-found maturity.

Other lessons of grace and courtesy might include:

- how to listen
- how to knock at a door and wait
- how to select a refreshment (take the one closest to you)
- how to blow your nose
- how to wait in line
- drinking and eating properly
- how to accept a gift (say "thank you")

...and the list could go on and on.

In each lesson, the positive aspects of a situation are stressed. Instead of reprimanding ("don't interrupt," "don't run," etc.), the Montessori teacher gives lessons such as "how to wait to be recognized," or "how to walk in the hall," aimed at preventing negative behavior before it occurs. Then, if a child "forgets," a gentle reminder may be all that is necessary; or re-presenting the game later may be an even more tactful reminder. Such an approach serves to protect children's growing sense of dignity and self-worth.

There is no material for Grace and Courtesy per se. You can't find it in a box on the shelf. The material is the two adults in the room who constantly model gracious and courteous behaviour.

Assistant's Role in Regards to the Director/ress

Communicate

The assistant and the director/ress must work to maintain open and convivial lines of communication. The period before and after school is a crucial time for sharing because when the children are present it is best to keep the conversation between the two adults to a minimum. The before-and-after school time is the time for assistants to share what they have observed and the time for the director/ress to share knowledge. It is hoped that in this way the two can become a team. During the day, non-verbal communication in the form of eye-contact and gestures can be quite effective, and when teamwork has been established, the pair will find they are doing a kind of "dance" together, providing a loving but vigilant watchfulness. A special kind of camaraderie and professional sharing can and should be developed.

At arrival and dismissal, the assistant may appear more accessible and less intimidating to parents than the director/ress. They will tend to confide in the assistant – sharing their concerns, stories, gossip, and so forth – rather than going to the director/ress. When this happens, it is suggested that the assistant defer to the director/ress. Professionalism and confidentially are prize virtues.

Preserve and Protect Lessons

As the director/ress is giving lessons and focusing her energies on one child at a time, the assistant is free to

view the room as a whole. An important responsibility of the assistant is to preserve and protect the lessons given to individual children or small groups of children. If the assistant can take care of the little "emergencies" which inevitably arise, look out for and disperse aimless groups of children, help sweep up the broken glass, and *remind* children of their rugs and their forgotten chairs, it protects the rights of everyone. Often our job is that of a policeman: protecting the honest citizen from the little criminals. Of course no one wants to be a policeman. But it is necessary to have a policeman to guard the civil law. Without rules, we have anarchy. The children do not have absolute freedom, even though they are given the freedom to choose their own work. We give them *freedom within limits*. If each member of the class insists on doing as he pleases, we have a class full of tyrants with resulting anarchy.

When everyone does as he pleases, the result is constant friction. Friction disturbs interpersonal relationships, which in turn intensifies the conflict. In an atmosphere of such constant conflict, stress and strain produce tension, anger, nervousness and irritability; and all the negative aspects of social living flourish. Freedom is part of democracy; but the subtle point that we cannot have freedom unless we respect the freedom of others is seldom recognized. No one can enjoy freedom unless his neighbor has it too. In order for everyone to have freedom, we must have order. And order bears with it certain restrictions and obligations.

"Freedom also implies responsibility. I am free to drive a car. But if I also feel free to drive it north in a southbound lane, my freedom will end very soon. The freedom to drive my car implies that I accept the restrictions in accordance with the rules of safety for everyone. We can only be free if ORDER is observed." (Dreikurs,1964, p. 9)

The Assistant's Role in Regards to Personal Preparation

Professional Development

The assistant must be loyal and supportive, even if he or she doesn't agree with the director/ress all the time. Professionalism, punctuality and confidentiality are all necessary, along with the obvious willingness to work. The assistant may enjoy bringing the best of him or herself into the classroom and might take some enrichment classes (storytelling, sign language, music, origami, etc.) to enhance what they offer to the children. It is always helpful to compile a "bag-of-tricks": songs, stories, poems to be read aloud,

COMMUNICATION: THE VALUE OF REFRAMING

DO'S	DON'TS
■ pose questions ■ encourage discoveries ■ seek helpers; use resources	■ give all the answers ■ solve all the problems
■ empower by giving choices & options	■ engage in power struggles ■ eliminate choices, corner the child
■ be natural ■ follow gut and intuition ■ use common sense	■ be rigid, stereotypical, or mechanical
■ be warm, gentle, loving, & affectionate ■ be free to laugh (light spirit)	■ create dependencies or attachments ■ be the entertainer or clown
■ touch in comfort or in response to the child	■ control with touch ■ touch uninvited
■ be clear, direct, honest, and straightforward with statements & names	■ give mixed messages ■ make statements into questions ■ have double standards
■ entice, seduce, invite, stimulate, guide ■ speak softly, gently ■ move slowly, gracefully	■ force or demand with ultimatums or harsh and angry speech
■ make direct eye contact ■ speak at eye level; listen	■ pretend to listen; interrupt; speed-up, or loom over the child

(Thanks to Joen Bettmann)

favorite books, and playground games. These are useful, particularly at transition times.

Spiritual Development

It is necessary for anyone working with small children to periodically engage in some form of self-evaluation. We all need to reflect on our own childhood and ask ourselves, "What baggage do I carry with me which keeps me from being able to be objective?" The adult in a Montessori class does little to control the children. But they need to do a lot to control them. This may necessitate a total re-framing of habitual response patterns (the don'ts) into new, positive patterns of behavior (the do's). *[See table on p. 51]*

Every assistant *can* be that invaluable aide every teacher dreams of. If the two work together, they can create a symphony – with first and second fiddle resonating in balanced harmony. ■

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Setting Limits – So Little Understood, So Greatly Needed

Judi Orion

When offering parent information meetings at school, which meeting consistently has the best attendance? When conferencing with parents, which child-rearing topic causes the most concerns; raises the most questions? When working with young teachers, which class issues cause the most problems? When training teachers, which aspect of "student teaching" gives the young teachers the most trouble? As a teacher of young children, which issues send you somewhere for advice or consume vast amounts of your planning time or cause the greatest frustrations?

Why, for many of us, is the idea of setting limits so difficult, sometimes viewed as negative, and not what is envisioned when thinking of working with young children?

All of life has limits. Limits are what make it possible for us to live together as social beings. Without limits we would live in chaos, with a fair amount of insecurity and with little or no predictability.

Limits offer tiny children a sense of security, order and consistency, safety, and a preliminary ability to predict what will happen next. Within a framework of limits a small child is able to make a positive human self-construction. When small children are left with no limits they are abandoned to their own devices and any construction that has been achieved is often destroyed. Movement patterns become chaotic, and the voice becomes loud and inappropriate for the situation. These behaviors, unfortunately, reinforce the view of the "terrible twos." Within a framework of limits, toddlers, who often rebel against limits, come to know that someone will control things when they are out of control. (Adolescents, who often rebel against limits, use those limits set by a loving family as a safeguard; when risking not being accepted by their peers by choosing to go against the group wishes, they use those limits as the excuse.)

Anywhere one goes today it is, unfortunately, the norm to encounter situations where an adult is unwilling to firmly and lovingly set limits for his or her toddler. We witness temper tantrums, physical abuse – the toddler striking out at the adult, crying, whining, begging; this is usually indicative of an experience pattern that informs the toddler that she simply has to persist and she will achieve what she wants. She "wears the adult down." This leaves a toddler with an unrealistic idea of personal power – power she knows she cannot really handle.

With the birth of each new being, we have an opportunity to help this child reach her full human potential or we can submit to her every whim, resulting in an unhappy, selfish child who constantly searches for someone who cares enough to tell her, "No, stop."

During the first year of an infant's life, it is difficult to imagine having to set limits on his behavior. A baby indicates her needs; if we are observant enough, we determine what those needs are and try to meet them. This system works great until this being begins to move about the environment. Once this being begins moving we find ourselves saying "No, don't touch," more often than we would like. Perhaps the environment has not been prepared to allow for exploration. If we acknowledge the infant's need to explore, does this mean we have to allow her to explore any and everywhere? Absolutely not. And perhaps this is when the problem begins.

Setting limits begins the moment an infant begins moving around the environment. A safe place for exploration is created and this is where the baby can explore. Of course, she is interested in any and everything. But some things simply are not safe to explore and therefore not allowed.

Parents and teachers are so often confused about what kind of limits are appropriate and when to set them. Since most of you are here primarily in the role of educator, not parent, I would like to focus on setting limits within an infant community.

First of all, in preparation for a community of children, we have to think about and envision the community. How would we like to see it running? What kind of behaviors would we expect in the children? Remembering that children arrive to us from many different parenting styles, we have to be clear about the style we plan to incorporate and be consistent with it.

We must also look to the present, the near future, and the distant future. If our goal for the distant future is to have an individual who is self-disciplined, who can accept the rules even if not in complete agreement with them, who can live peacefully in any society accepting and honoring the freedoms of others, then we must prepare for that future now.

If we want a child who can handle the freedoms offered in the primary Montessori class, who can interact with the larger group of children in the primary, who can master self-discipline in the primary years, then we must begin that process now.

If we want a child who can master impulse control (a major developmental milestone of the second year), who can slowly come to accept the existence of others and the rights and freedoms of others, then we must begin preparing for that the day the child enters our community.

This leads us to contemplate the "rules of the community." Like any other community of humans, each one's freedom ends where another's freedom begins. So what kinds of rules must be established to protect the freedom of all the members of this community?

1. No one may hurt another person's body.
2. No one may harm the materials in the environment.

When you have too many rules with children, you find yourself constantly spending time reinforcing the rules and not working with the children.

With rule number one, "No one may hurt another person's body," this implies that there will be no biting, pushing, pulling away from, or hitting. Even one child's yelling may be "hurtful" to the ears of another person. Whenever this occurs, the behavior is stopped in one of several ways.

You speak to the child firmly, "We do not bite people. You may bite on this

teething ring." Acknowledge the frustration behind the biting but do not excuse the biting because of it. Also, don't create victims by giving undue attention to the child who has been bitten or pushed. Acknowledge the hurt, put ice on it, if necessary, write an accident report and get on with things. To the perpetrator we must very firmly and very clearly state the limits again and again. Gradually, the children will come to accept that limits regarding their physical safety are being enforced. "We yell outside; inside we speak softly." "You may sit here to have your tantrum."

With rule number two, "No one may harm the materials in the environment," it is implied that nothing can be thrown, that one must move one's body in such a way not to bump into furniture, people, etc. When running, throwing, etc. occurs, the behavior is stopped. "We run outside; inside we walk." "We throw balls outside." "If you throw the material, you may not work with it." "Before choosing that puzzle, you must put the animals back on the shelf."

We must also remember that a toddler is in a developmental crisis we refer to as the "crisis of self-affirmation" (as opposed to the "opposition crisis"). A child in this developmental crisis needs to be given choices so that she feels empowered to have some control over herself and that those adults important to her acknowledge that she is a completely separate being from her mother.

When interrupting inappropriate behavior – running, yelling, biting, pushing, etc. – whenever possible, give the child a choice. But sometimes a choice is not a possibility.

"I can see you need to run. Would you like to go outside now to run or run later?"

"We're going outside. Can you put your shoes on yourself or do you need my help?"

"The puzzle must be picked up. Can you do it by yourself or do you need help?"

"I see you have left the watering can on the floor. Before choosing something else to work on you must put the watering can away."

"This paint is not for the walls. Let's go wash your hands and choose other work."

For many adults we procrastinate in setting limits, allowing our emotions to become involved and perhaps noticing some underlying anger creeping in. Then, when we voice a limit, we are so emotionally "hooked" that we are either ambivalent or unclear, or the limit is not realistic for the situation. We overreact and are usually emotionally involved. Perhaps our ego is involved in how well the children follow our rules. Perhaps we feel as if we are an inadequate teacher if we have discipline problems. Perhaps we have some unresolved control issues in which we have to make the children understand that we are the ones in control. The secret is that we are not the ones in control of everything; we can only control ourselves. If children are given work appropriate for their developmental needs of the moment, they come into control of themselves.

In order to be clear about setting limits, and about the appropriateness of limits, we must take some time for soul-searching. What was our personal experience with limits as a child? Do we remember? Do we view our childhood as being either very restrictive or very free? If we have children of our own, how do we/did we set limits for them? Do we understand and accept a young child's deep need for exploration and allow for those possibilities?

When a young baby begins walking, they want and need to walk. Do we allow this possibility? Or would we prefer them to now sit quietly and play? In an Infant Community, do we accept the abilities of these young children and allow them to work to their own capacity, or do we try to interfere with the way we think the work should be done? Do we have perfectionistic tendencies hampering our relationship with children? Are our expectations realistic for the abilities and developmental needs of the children in our group?

Limits are going to be handled differently for children at different developmental stages. An 18-month-old is going to need more assistance in putting work away, but the work will be put away. A two-year-old can put her work away independently and accept that nothing else can be taken on the shelf until the first activity is put away.

If you notice work left out and the "owner" is already engaged, is concentrating on something new, wait until she finishes. For an older child (a two-year- old) you simply step in when she finishes and say, "I notice you left the animals on the table. Please put them away now." For younger children, once they are actively engaged in new work, the "old" work is no longer theirs. They will often happily help you put it away but with no ownership of the work. They are so "in the moment" that once finished, the work is no longer theirs. And so, with the limit that the work will be returned to its place, you seduce the younger child to help you, you give a very clear choice to the two-year-old.

When a child comes into the environment having had few or no limits, we must simultaneously work with the parents to help them understand our belief about limits. If parents cannot accept that their child will live with limits in the environment, then perhaps the child will be better served in a different type of program. There does come a point when one has to accept that Montessori may not be the answer for everyone. However, before sending away families, examine your own beliefs first. Are you comfortable with setting limits or does ambivalence creep in? "Put your work away, o.k.?" "Want to help me clean up the table?" "You hurt my feelings when you say that."

How clear are you about limits? There is not a formula one can give about how to set them. You must first believe in the benefits and necessity of limits; then you must practice setting them. They are unique to each situation but, at the same time, general to the running of a social group.

If you find you want or need more specific help regarding setting limits, I recommend ordering the tape by the Love and Logic Institute, *Toddlers, Love and Logic Parenting for Early Childhood.* The Love and Logic Institute is an institute dedicated to helping parents and educators use a loving and logical approach to child raising.

From their materials

What is *Love and Logic?* Love allows children to grow through their mistakes. Logic allows them to live with the consequences of their choices.

The Love and Logic Process:

1. Shared control: Gain control by giving away the control you don't need.
2. Shared thinking and decision-making: Provide opportunities for the child to do the greatest amount of thinking and deci sion-making.
3. Equal shares of consequences with empathy: An absence of anger causes a child to think and learn from her mistakes.
4. Maintain the child's self-concept: Increased self-concept leads to improved behavior and improved achievement. ■

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Freedom that Inspires Responsibility: Removing the Obstacles

Cathryn Kasper

Thirty years ago, I met a woman who changed my life. I opened the cover of a little blue book with a child's handprint on the front and she stepped out and spoke to me. We hadn't met before, but she knew my child. She told me great mysteries about him that I had not even considered, of his powers and abilities, of his spiritual nature. These resonated so deeply within me that I knew she understood him and was telling me the truth.

A year later, I literally sat at the feet of her son, Mario, a calm, gentle man with a twinkle in his eye. He too spoke of the child I knew, but now I realized it was the precious universal child of whom they spoke – *Every Child*. My teacher, Estela Colmenero Palmieri had miraculously persuaded Mario Montessori to spend an afternoon at the Los Angeles Montessori Teacher Training Institute. He listened to our many questions patiently. To each one he gave a thoughtful reply, and almost always it included this phrase: "Follow the child." To this day, those words remain some of the best advice I've ever received. Today I want to share with you what I am learning about this universal child.

Dr. Montessori astounded the world when she declared that liberty to act freely within limits is the key to normal development and the open door to inner freedom. She said: "We cannot make a man good, we can only help him to make himself."[1] Instead of education being the work of the adult, she stated that, "The child orders his own life. This is an expression of childhood. Imagine what a wonderful thing it is. Freedom and discipline come together. This [is] a discovery because they are generally thought to be opposite things. Instead we find that there is no freedom without discipline. Freedom and discipline are a harmonious combination. They are strictly connected one with the other."[2]

She wanted to change forever the way people regarded the child. She went so far as to insist that her approach of giving freedom to the child was not a method of instruction, but a "Help to Life."[3]

Then there is that word "discipline." Over time, in today's world, this word has taken on almost an interpretation of repression. I feel that what she intended was to convey the idea of mastery of self. That kind of discipline involves a choice. At first that choice may be intermittent, then frequent, then it may be so integrated that it is the child's automatic response. Dr. Montessori called this process the "three levels of obedience."[4] The final step in this process of gradually being able to respond to the guiding adult, is to internalize the process so completely that the response comes without the adult. This last step is responsibility. To me, this is the child's expression of true freedom. That choice for responsible action can only be made by the child who is free to think and act for himself. Responsibility is the manifestation of the incarnation of freedom on all three levels: physical, psychological and spiritual.

Dr. Montessori saw that this ordering of one's own life was a natural state. She maintained that there are activities characteristic of all children which they must be allowed to carry out. We continue to see evidence that the child in the process of self-formation is driven by the "Universal Tendencies"[5] and is drawn to certain activities by the succession of the "Sensitive Periods."[6]

In this quest, it is normal to encounter some natural obstacles because he is, at this time, too small, too weak, too lacking in control of his movements to be successful at everything he tries. We adults can warp and delay this quest by being too restrictive, too helpful – thereby doubling the child's difficulty. Then the child's protestations are typically interpreted as misbehavior, rather than, as they truly are, a bid for freedom to be independent.

Today, we repeat Dr. Montessori's experiment that became her prescription: "normalize the condition"[7] of this overburdened child by means of freedom. Then we discover what she did: that this environment of the Children's House is diagnostic, remedial, and liberating. In this environment, totally different traits arise. This transformation continues to intrigue adults, and now has been rediscovered by such social scientists as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and noted Dr. Jane Healy.

So, how do we go about preparing the environment for freedom and responsibility to manifest itself? We prepare the adult, we prepare the environment, we prepare the parents.

Let us first consider the prepared adult. What brought you to this work? Does that curiosity, that intention to help, still burn bright within you? You need it every day, because it will be the deciding factor in your actions. This process of being conscious, of intending and choosing to do our best, is where we show our responsibility. We have been entrusted with the child whom Dr. Montessori describes as the "Spiritual Embryo"[8] – the child in the second embryonic period – the prolonged infancy of the human being in which the child absorbs and incarnates his total environment. Sir Percy Nunn named that absorbing and incarnating ability the "mneme."[9]

Our challenge as prepared adults is to prepare an environment that can liberate the child from both "the prison" and "the desert."[10] This process requires furnishings and materials to be beautifully attractive, child-size, breakable, and precise, so the child can increase his strength and understanding by repetition, thus liberating himself from the "prison of the flesh" by achieving control over her movements. Then, the adult must master the art of presenting the materials. It is through these presentations that we give a choice of appropriate developmental activity to the child through which he liberates himself from the "desert" of boredom.

Physical order is the basis necessary for the Human Tendencies and the Sensitive Periods to operate effectively. Disorder is the obstacle, so we go over every area with that in mind:

- Does the floorplan allow for orien-

tation, freedom of exploration, and efficient movement?

- Do the materials present a clear progression by their order on the shelves?
- Are the materials beautiful and attractive to the child? Look for handmade containers that have historical and cultural significance, tactile interest, and most of all, took some control of movement and creativity to make.
- Are materials complete within each exercise so the child can explore, discover, and repeat to mastery?
- Are the walls of the classroom made interesting by beautiful pictures and hanging artifacts that are rotated and labeled weekly, and thus form the inspiration for your true stories and the child's own work?
- Are the outdoor extension and playpark prepared with the same attention to detail and appropriateness as the indoor environment? Do they invite not only physical development, but also exploration of botany and zoology?

Before the year begins, consider the social environment. Which liberties and limits apply?

- Freedom of Movement comes within the limits of respect for others and the needs of the community.
- Freedom to take food & drink must be done safely with attention to cleanliness.
- Freedom to respond to personal needs happens within a structure of safety, so the child uses a pass to let adults know she is leaving the class and going down the hall to the bathroom.
- Freedom to choose an activity is based on its availability on the shelf and if it has been presented.
- Freedom to work as long as one desires is there, provided that materials are used with care and purpose, and that they are returned, in order, to the appropriate location on the shelf.
- Freedom to observe another person's work, or to sit alone not working, is available on the condition that it is quiet, and does not interrupt anyone. These freedoms are always offered to provide the child with maximum opportunities to develop and explore.

This may be a child's first experience of a social environment of peers. Eduardo Cuevas gave a wonderful example of this entering child in his parent education evening at the Sun Garden Montessori School in Portland, Oregon, last October. He described a child who you will recognize; whose parents' love had become "idolatry," planting in the child a belief in his own "monarchy." This little one enters the social environment of the *Casa* to discover other kings and queens, just as sure of their complete entitlement to royal attention – a shock! Here, to their surprise, the rights of **all** are protected. The teacher is clearly the authority. Here, they discover a small but firm set of limits – another shock to the monarch! Here, there is respect for the rights of everyone as well as for the group as a whole.

Dr. Montessori gave us an insight into another child whom we recognize, even when he arrives in the guise of the monarch. She describes "the child of three [who], when he first comes to school, is a fighter on the verge of being vanquished; he has already a defensive attitude which masks his deeper nature. The higher energies, which could guide him to a disciplined peace and a divine wisdom, are asleep. All that remains active is a superficial personality which exhausts itself in clumsy movements, vague ideas, and the effort to resist or avoid adult constraint."[11]

Dr. Montessori pointed out that, "If discipline were already arrived, our work would hardly be needed; the child's instinct would be a safe enough guide to enable him to deal with every difficulty."[12] So we must plan the opportunities for this child to become a normalized part of society. It happens through the experience of the kindness and respect modeled by the adults and experienced children, and through the group exercises of Grace and Courtesy. Our adult manners must be impeccable. They relay the message that the child is free and safe to develop. As the child gets older, and more interested in group activity, we must be alert to the time to present guidelines for social interaction through these exercises.

Particularly on the play park, where there are no didactic materials, the environment is larger, and there is increased opportunity for movement, a new sensibility must be awakened. We have been trying two outdoor practices at our school: Alfie Kohn suggests that we must be "engaged," that is, to go beyond just putting rules out and enforcing them. We must be active in explaining why these processes make for a happier community. Children wanting to relate socially to others need not only examples, but also the opportunity for dialogue.[13] We begin by talking about Vivian Gussin Paley's guideline of "You Can't Say You Can't Play."[14] Although negatively stated, it is brief and true. We give Grace and Courtesy lessons about how to modify games to include everyone who wants to play. The other important aspect of an inclusive social model is learning how to take turns in decision-making about group activities. If there are two or more desired activities that a group could do together, we may help a discussion about which to do first, rather than have a decision based on majority rule. This makes it worthwhile for everyone to participate. It leads to a social environment that calls to each one to be creative and responsible to others.

We also must "prepare" the parents. We offer our assistance to them in welcoming conferences before the year begins, so we can establish understanding of our approach, so there will be harmony between the systems of home and the *Casa*. We prepare ourselves to be a resource to the larger support systems in our cities if special diagnosis for vision, hearing, or other physical or psychological needs arise. We initiate activities and newsletters which help parents of our school community meet and support each other. Most importantly, we extend our open-hearted patience, and appreciation for the tremendous work that they are doing. Look for positive steps and encourage them.

Now the stage is set, the players arrive, and the drama begins! How do you personally begin your own day? I sometimes go to each piece of material that I intend to present that day and touch it, checking for order and beauty.

Our Northwest trainer, Shannon Helfrich, gave us a great idea: take off your shoes and walk on the line in silence. I find this is a walking meditation almost like a labyrinth, and also like mindfulness training as I breathe and become aware of each step.[15] With this, I leave the outer world behind, and enter into the world of childhood, ready for my guides for the day – ready to follow the child.

During this day, we are observers, presenters, and guides. This is our own adult cycle of normalization. Observation is both objective and intuitive. We can sit in a relaxed way, letting our posture be soft, our gaze soft, allowing our receptive nature to open to what is before us. We can consciously observe in an objective, scientific way. And we can also open more than our eyes. We can open our hearts, looking for the positive aspects of each child's behavior, the signs of the developing personality. For now, we look for the normalization that is taking place before our eyes. We are wanting and looking for the signs. I like to put a small sentence of reminder at the top of my daily observation sheet as a checklist of what I intend to look for: concentration/flow, development of the will, control of movement, social grace, courtesy, the child on the brink of discovery.

Later, at a quiet time, we can return to the notes and decide on solutions to the obstacles.

Then it is time for presentation. We must come to the child with the awareness of what we have observed and make a connection from our heartfelt wish for their benefit. We give clear, precise visual demonstrations, and only essential words so the child absorbs enough to freely explore. We take our leave just as concentration begins, and then we protect, observe, and when necessary, hide from the child who has found his work.

Here we return to the work of the scientist, remembering that we are still conducting the experiment that Dr. Montessori began so long ago. She declared that the teacher must have a "general interest in the manifestation of natural phenomena until he comes to the point where he loves nature and experiences the anxiety of one who has prepared an experiment and is waiting for new data to appear."[16] We observe again, and again, and again, using our discoveries to guide us in removing the obstacles to development, by removing unused or abused material, rotating activities for interest, and replacing worn and broken things.

We give the liberty to work to the child, allowing their development – when in doubt, stay out. This freedom to work as long as they want gives them the feeling of spaciousness and security to proceed in their own way. We must keep accurate records, so we can present the stairways – the natural progression of materials that present the opportunity to become more skilled, and thus produce the feeling of security that comes from knowing their environment.

We also must plan what I call the "stairways" and "ripples" – planning and watching the child for ways to widen the application of skills to extend the cycle of activity. The key to this growth is the balance between freedom to work on activities that appeal to the child's interest because they answer an inner drive to perfect and master life skills, and limits that are natural to the formation of community and productive approaches to work.

The "stairways" may be offered through points of interest of following exercises – things that draw the child forward through the materials. We must watch for these signs and be ready to offer the next step. It may be a new point of interest, "Can you wash the whole table without one drop on the floor?"; or a following activity, "Look how clean and dry this table is – would you like to see how to make it shine?"

We can structure solutions to the challenges of our particular environments so the children make things work, and the solution becomes theirs. For example, the water from our tap tastes of chlorine. So we bought a large Britta filtering pitcher, from which we fill a small pitcher for children to serve themselves water. This requires patience and control of movement as the child first goes to get a glass from the snack shelf, then pours water, carries it to a table, sits, and then may drink the water. What a change for the monarch who declares: "Mom, I want a drink!" Now the youngest children are unable to refill the pitcher, so they must go ask the four-year-olds to please refill the small pitcher. The four-year-olds then go ask the older children to please refill the Britta pitcher. Here is a cycle that involves many levels of social cooperation and responsibility to accomplish. In this free society, the children's experiences lead directly to the realization of their responsibilities. What's more, their eagerness to demonstrate and use their abilities leads directly to being of service to others. The rewards are intrinsic in the activity and require no further acclaim than the thanks of their friends.

Then there are the activities that "ripple" out into larger and longer cycles of independent activity. In our class, the cycle of food and drink begins simply, but grows in complexity as the child develops. We begin the year with the basic lessons of food preparation as individual activities of practical life. As children master these skills, I invite them to help prepare snack for the class. The volunteer chefs of the day put their name card into holders that let the other children know who is doing this work today. They don aprons and chef's hats and wash up at the hand-washing exercise.

At the beginning of the year, the food and preparation tools are laid out for the children on the food prep table. Now, at this point in the development of this community, the oldest ones know how to get the food from the tiny refrigerator, gather the colander for washing the food, the chopping boards from the food prep cupboard, and bowls to hold the prepared food on the snack shelf. The assistant gives them sharp knives from the adult cupboard. They go about their work happily, usually observed by younger ones (at a safe, designated distance). As they finish the preparation, they put out bowls of food with little recipe instructions above them, and snack is ready for anyone who is hungry. They proceed to wash the prep dishes, then usually go on to get their own snacks.

The procedure for getting a snack is structured for increasing skills and responsibilities, as well. Children new to the class are invited as a very small group to have snack together, in a group where they are introduced to the proper way to offer and accept food. It is very simple, and also very quick. "Henry, would you like a cracker?"

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"Yes, please!" Crackers are offered, then comes, "Thank you" and "You're welcome." Then they return to work, and the assistant tidies up, usually helped by one or two children.

Then comes the next level. Gradually, these new ones are given lessons on how to set a place on a placemat, then invited to a lesson on washing hands at the hand washing table, then given their own lesson on how to prepare their own snack. There is a shelf with five little placemats, a stack of dishes, and silverware as needed. The children set out the placemat, serve themselves according to little picture cards above the food bowls, then eat at their table, and clean up by washing their own dishes, cleaning their table, and returning the placemat for another person to use.

By January, we are ready to begin a new level of work: the *we cooked it ourselves* lunch. The children plan the menu, choosing foods from many lands. I post a list of ingredients on the bulletin board, and they help their parents sign up and shop for them. They prepare and cook the meal, create a long lunch table by moving all the largest tables, which they set and decorate. We all sit and eat together, serve, and clean up, restoring the room to order for the afternoon work period. This process incorporates many cycles of work, all rippling out from the interest in lunch. It relies on independence, food preparation skills, and taking responsibility for working as a group. This past year, 16 children between the ages of 4 1/2 to 6 accomplished this nearly every Friday from January to June. I am in awe of their level of accomplishment.

Joy in all things is the crowning characteristic of a Montessori learning environment. In *The Absorbent Mind*, the cooperation of the mixed age groups is documented by Dr. Montessori as she describes the "love and admiration on both sides" as the older "heroes and teachers"[17] spontaneously initiate activities and support the younger children. A 4 1/2-year-old in our class this year epitomized this in the photos you see here. She organized a group of 3-year-olds into a "bring me" game with the vocabulary enrichment cards. I also see a great deal of empathy and responsibility in the actions of one of the older girls in class who took a great interest in a very shy peer, whose understanding and conversations in English were limited. Maddie often sought her out, inviting her to work with her, eat lunch with her and play games. Maddie saw her need and reached out to her, bringing her into the social group. It was an example of the success of Dr. Montessori's great experiment in which "everyone develops in a healthy, normal way . . . through the exchange of spiritual energy."[18]

Our work in the *Casa* is not complete until we help the child toward the open door. At the end of each year we sing together in a Native American chant: "Good where we've been, good where we're going to." These words encapsulate our experience, for we are but the open door through which the child may walk. This should include observation, hours in the next environment, and visits from the elementary teacher. Also extend this invitation to the public schools. We must establish a good ground of communication with the elementary guide, and/or give helpful information to the public school where they will attend. It is our last work in removing the obstacles and promoting harmony between systems.

Freedom and responsibility are also hallmarks of what Dr. Montessori saw as a social movement for peace. She spoke passionately of that "drive for freedom, the individual's inherent need to be let alone so that he can act on his own."[19] It was her strong conviction that, "Society cannot develop unless the individual develops."[20] She said, " The first step has been taken in our schools, which have given the child the possibility of teaching us this great revealing lesson and helping us pursue this goal scientifically. The first step, from which all the rest follow, is then to help the child develop all his functions as a free individual and to foster that development of personality that actuates social organization."[21] We can see that enlivened by the liberties and opportunities of the prepared environment, the child can fulfill his task of developing personality, become "orientated to his environment, adapted to his time, place and culture."[22] This is a person who freely participates in community, voluntarily living by its rules. This is the responsibility that we see in one who has had a sure sense of personal freedom, and the generosity of spirit to extend it to others in ways that are creative, compassionate, loving, and joyous. These are the new children, the ones that bring "an onset of hope"[23] to our world. ■

Notes:

[1] Margaret Stephenson, paraphrasing Dr. Montessori in Keynote address to the 1996 AMI National Conference.

[2] Dr. Montessori, *The Child, Society and the World*, Clio Press 1989, p. 23.

[3] Margaret Stephenson, *The Secret Childhood*, Foreward, Fides Publishers, Inc. 1966, p. xv.

[4] Dr. Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, Clio Press 1989, p. 235.

[5] Margaret Stephenson, *The Secret of Childhood*, Foreward, Fides Publishers, Inc. 1966, p. xxv.

[6] Dr. Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, Fides Publishers, Inc. 1966, p.46.

[7] Dr. Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, Clio Press 1989, p. 182.

[8] Ibid., p. 55.

[9] Ibid., p. 57.

[10] Dr. Montessori, *What You Should Know About Your Child*, Kalakshetra Publications, Vasanta Press, 1966, p.55.

[11] Dr. Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, Clio Press, 1989, p. 241.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Alfie Kohn, *The Brighter Side of Human Nature*.

[14] Vivian Gussin Paley, *You Can't Say You Can't Play*.

[15] Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step*, p. 27.

[16] Dr. Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*, Fides Publishers, Inc., 1967, p. 4.

[17] Dr. Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, Clio Press, 1989, p. 206.

[18] Ibid., p. 207.

[19] Dr. Montessori, *Education and Peace*, Henry Regnery Co, 1972, p 123.

[20] Ibid., p.65.

[21] Ibid., p.123.

[22] Dr. Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, Fides Publishers, 1966, p. xvii.

[23] Margaret Stephenson, Philosophy Lecture, Los Angeles Teacher Training Institute, Spring 1972.

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The Necessary Freedom to Become Montessori *Erdkinder*

Laurie Ewert-Krocker

Part I: Linking the Adolescent to the Environment

Why the farm? Montessori suggested that a farm would be an environment that could meet the needs and characteristics of the age. Adolescents are in a rapid state of growth and need to use their bodies to discover their own abilities and strengths, and to balance their growth with productive work. When you work with adolescents, you see their need to move mountains, cut down trees, wield axes, carry lumber, dig in the soil, clear trails. They are not unlike the 2-3 year-old carrying chairs, moving furniture, but the adolescent moves the furniture of the world.

Montessori called the adolescent "the social embryo" – they are in the stage of birth into adult society. They need to explore and discover in what ways they can make contributions to their community. They need to try on roles in the community – roles which we call "occupations." Their developmental task is to become contributing social beings. They need to know what they can do and what they can be good at. They have a strong desire to feel a sense of purpose and mission, to know that they have a cosmic task. And they need to feel that humanity has a purpose, a cosmic task, and that they can participate in it.

The modern world is too complex for the young social embryo to navigate just yet, so the farm provides a microcosm of the social world, a community that meets its fundamental needs, that has its own micro-economy, that participates in the larger world as well. And within it, the tasks available are tasks the adolescent can be successful at: growing food, weaving cloth, raising animals, running a bed and breakfast, running a market, maintaining a household, cooking and preparing meals, producing craft items in the wood shop, caring for the local ecosystem and environment. The result is, as Montessori puts it, "a strengthening of self-confidence," a "valorization of the personality."

The prepared environment of the farm is a specialized environment in that it provides opportunities that are adult-like in their contribution to the community, but within the grasp of adolescents. Our job is to prepare that environment and then link them to it.

At the Farm School we are linking them to the farm environment in three ways:

1) By offering them roles in the community (care for self, care for environment, care for others)
2) By offering them occupations on the land – tasks that contribute to the running of the farm, with its various tasks and businesses
3) By offering opportunities for investigations and inquiries possible on the farm and in the community, sparked by individual interest (the "limitless field for scientific and historic studies")

Community Life

In order to create a true community life, we have incorporated boarding at the farm. We have day students – the middle school students from Hershey Montessori School – but we have built a facility that allows 24 boarding students to reside. We are also providing the day students with 25 nights boarding as part of their tuition, in order to integrate community life.

As community members, students will prepare and help cook meals, clean the building, monitor energy use, monitor water quality, manage resource use and recycling, chop wood for heat, maintain the building, pay the bills, sew curtains, make rugs, weave place mats. They will help to grow food in the gardens and greenhouse, can, freeze, and preserve the food, care for the animals – milk the cow, feed the chickens, collect eggs, feed and shear the sheep.

Roles and Occupations

As another way for them to engage in the life of the community on the level of enacting roles as occupations, we will offer them real-life tasks that also require contextual studies in order to be accomplished. There are many opportunities for them to integrate work and study. For example, insemination of the cow requires background knowledge in anatomy and reproduction, genetics and bovine care. These are hard sciences, the knowledge of which allows the students to become momentary experts in order to accomplish the task of breeding the cow.

Another occupation might be water quality maintenance. We live on the crest of two watersheds. The water we use finds its way into two river systems, both emptying into Lake Erie. We draw our water from wells, and we have an on-site water treatment system that uses a wetland as part of the purification process. Understanding this system and monitoring it is an occupation that requires knowledge of water chemistry, wetland ecosystems, and the technology of water purification systems.

We use and maintain machines on the farm. Understanding the physics of machines is necessary background knowledge for using them. We had a project this year that involved studying simple machines and their application to farming. The students made their own primitive hay forks (a form of a lever) out of wood, using tools in the process that involved both wedges and inclined planes. The task of machine making produced a context for a study in physics.

We have a stand of maple trees, and maple syrup production is a major industry in our county. In order to produce maple syrup, we needed a structure (a sugar house), we needed to assess our maple tree stand (sugar bush), understand the plant processes that result in sap movement, and learn to process the sap to the proper temperature and density to produce syrup. All of these activities provided occupations that required contextual knowledge including tree identification and measurement, the physics and geometry of construction, the biology of plant processes, and the use of a hydrometer to measure the density of a liquid. Other occupations have included:

Soil analysis
Pig care and meat for human consumption (nutrition)
Mapping the land (both triangulating and using modern GIS)

Digging, cataloguing, and studying history from the archaeological site
Growing of plants in the bioshelter
Running the bed and breakfast business
Running the farm market

Individual Exploration and Study

Finally, the land, the farm, and the local communities provide the invitation and the springboard for explorations that are simply areas of interest for individuals and small groups, such as:

Amish culture study
Aerodynamics
Child development
Astronomy
Local history

And each role, occupation, or exploration is an experience in human history – for each of these roles is played out over and over again in human communities over time, and each informs the adolescent of his connectedness to all people in all places. It also provides a window onto the future of humanity, for our land, our farm, our community faces the same issues of survival, interdependence, human impact on the ecosystem, and global ethics as does every other community on the planet. If one can play a role in our microcosm, communicate, problem-solve, improve health, and discover beauty, then the hope is that the adolescent takes that microcosmic vision into any other environment he subsequently enters and cultivates faith in humanity's ability to become collectively moral – and in the process, acting more consciously himself.

The Montessori adolescent environment – the farm – should be a model and a testing ground for that building of self-confidence, for the valorizing of the personality, for the aid to adaptability and independence, but also to moral development.

And everything we have experienced so far tells us it can be.

Part II: How we got to the land

First, we got there by having a long-term vision, both as individuals and as a community. It has been an understanding that Hershey Montessori School would include a land-based approach to adolescent education.

We got there on the experience of other adolescent practitioners who were reaching out to try farm-like experiences: John Long and Pat Ludick at Ruffing; Larry Schaefer at Lake Country; Michael Bagiackas from Hershey, who helped to create the farmstead and land lab at our school.

We got there through the grace of parents and board members who truly wanted the best in Montessori principles for their children, and who trusted us as professionals and as parents and friends.

We got there by integrating the students' work and experiences with the land and community as soon as possible: our curriculum included studies of local biodiversity, studies of habitats on the school property, a study of our watershed, running a small class market business, doing community service with young children in the school and at local nursing homes. Our history studies included inquiries into the effect of cultures on the land – the significance of agriculture in human evolution, the effect of the Industrial Revolution on society and the planet.

We got to the land through the generosity of one community member who had land and resources to donate, to help fund the building of a facility, and through the generosity of other philanthropists and donors who followed suit.

But mostly we got there by bringing the students onto the land and inviting them to become stewards, pioneers, designers, and builders. We offered them real roles in the process of developing this farm school and their high level of engagement, concern, and joy in the process convinced everyone else that this was right for them.

The environment needed to be prepared. So we invited them to:

- Assess trees and help clear and mill them
- Build initial structures: the sugar house for maple syrup making, bridges over creeks
- Start the gardens; harvest and distribute the produce; make maple syrup and salsa; sell the products
- Consult with the architect and interior designers on design aspects of the building
- Participate in the installation of the waste treatment system
- Begin initial gridding and preparation of archaeological dig site
- Do initial investigations into greenhouse structures/bio-shelter designs
- Do initial mapping of the property and its trail system
- Clear trails
- Research domestic animal care and help design barn and pasture layout
- Cultivate a sense of ownership and stewardship – that this is their land, their responsibility

We hiked to the farm, camped out, star-gazed, hiked on the property, had ceremonies, did art work, wrote journals and poetry, took photographs, had reflective time, played, prayed, sang, and had seminar discussions.

We recorded our research and ideas in articles and newsletters that went out to parents and friends of the community. We set up a website. The students gave tours and presentations of their work at the farm at Open Houses and to special visitors. The students gave tours to younger children in other classes.

We studied the local communities and their histories; went to cemeteries, interviewed local historians. We met our government representatives. We went to the county fair; we entered our maple syrup in the county contest.

We inseminated the cow, whose calf was just born, and to whom the students are strongly dedicated.

We invited their ownership and responsibility at a level that was not tokenistic, but real. And they responded by raising themselves to a higher level of knowledge, skill, awareness, and dedication. They responded by becoming more confident, more independent, and more nurturing of the land and each other.

My graduates write about their experience on the farm, even after some time has passed. The local teachers tell me about their essays and autobiographies – and the significant role the farm played in their lives.

As one of my students put it, "I cannot believe that this is where I go to school. This is such an amazing place. And it's *ours*." ■

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Freeing the Child's Response-Ability: Celebrating the Natural Genius of Children

Thomas Armstrong, Ph.D.

The words "freedom" and "responsibility" related to children have connotations that seem at first to me to be quite in opposition. When I think of "freedom" in connection with children, I think of children chasing after butterflies, climbing trees, and dancing in the wind. Conversely, when I associate the word "responsibility" to children, I think of them taking out the garbage, doing their homework, and mowing the lawn. It's very easy for us to conceive of these two sets of activities as mutually exclusive (viz. "you can chase butterflies after you've taken out the garbage!!"). Such a dichotomy disappears, however, when we disencumber each word from its common set of cultural connotations, and start to relate to it more in terms of its face value meaning. What is freedom, in this context, but the domain where a child can be free? What is responsibility, but the ability of a child to respond (response-ability)? Isn't it possible now to put the two ideas together? Can we conceive of a situation in which children have the ability, that is to say, the freedom, to respond to the world, to life?

I would suggest that this is the fundamental condition of children. This is the essential impulse, I feel, of Maria Montessori's own work: that she recognized this biological-spiritual being of children as having an innate ability to respond to the environment, to the world around them, in a miraculous way, in a way that was so amazing that it would never be seen again at that level of intensity in the course of the child's development into adulthood. The deep level of respect that Dr. Montessori had for children, all the more remarkable for the era in which she lived (when children were not regarded as the paragons of potential that they are in today's world), was, I feel, informed both by her scientific/biological background – seeing a child's incredible "response-ability" much as a marine biologist might marvel at the delicate responsiveness of fan coral to the ocean's currents – as well as by her religious/spiritual background, viewing a child's spiritual being as the most sensitive and refined of entities that could be gloriously uplifted (or conversely, ignominiously crushed) by the subtlest of gestures, actions, or feelings from the adults around him or her.

Understanding the extraordinary ability of the child to respond to life is what I found personally most earth shattering in Dr. Montessori's work, and it was that which originally led me to enter the field of education twenty-eight years ago. Since that time, although it seems at times as if I've been aimlessly wandering in a labyrinth of competing educational philosophies, ideas, techniques, methods, and roles, I have always held Dr. Montessori's deep respect for the child as a golden thread to help me find my way back home.

In my own work, I've referred to this incredible ability of a child to respond to the world as his or her own genius. When I use the word genius, I go back to its original etymological meaning. If you look the word genius up in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, where word meanings are defined chronologically (with earlier and more fundamental definitions coming first), you will discover that its earliest definitions are related to the words *genesis* ("to give birth") and *genial* ("to bring pleasure"). When I use the word genius, then, I do not use it in its contemporary definition of describing someone who can achieve a high score on an IQ test, or paint like Picasso, but rather in its more fundamental meaning of "to give birth to joy" and in particular "to give birth to the joy of learning." In this context, every child is a genius, because every child is born with this innate ability, this freedom to respond to the world with joy. One of my favorite images for this sense of the genius in children is represented by the "explosion into writing" that occurred in Dr. Montessori's first Children's House. As she writes: "The child who first made the discovery was so astonished that he shouted out loud: 'I've written, I've written!' The children excitedly ran up to look at the words which he had traced on the floor with a piece of chalk. 'Me too, me too!' they shouted as they ran off in search of writing materials. Some crowded around the blackboard. Others stretched themselves out upon the floor. They all began to write. Their boundless activity was like a torrent. They wrote everywhere, on doors, walls, and even on loaves of bread at home." (*The Secret of Childhood*, pp. 131-132)

This idea of learning as an ecstatic activity is not a familiar one in today's test-ridden schools. Recently, I entered the key words "love of learning" into a popular education database on the internet. I received only 13 citations. Then I entered the words "learning disabilities" and I was flooded with thousands of citations. We seem to be studying the wrong things in education these days. So much focus is placed on the problems, the flaws, the disorders and deficits, that we have lost touch with the essence of what it means to learn, and what it is that the child does best, that is, to learn with joy. Another of Dr. Montessori's observations that has stayed with me over the years is her experience of observing a three-year-old girl slipping cylinders in and out of their containers. Dr. Montessori watched this child go through forty-two repetitions of this activity with a rapt and focused attention that seemed almost as if it were prayer or meditation. She writes: "Then she stopped as if coming out of a dream and smiled happily. Her eyes shone brightly and she looked about…she had become so absorbed in what she was doing that her ego became insensible to external stimuli." (*The Secret of Childhood*, pp. 119-120) We need more educational research of this kind in all of our classrooms, more research on "peak experiences" in learning – because these are the experiences that nurture the spiritual being of the child. I suspect that as

the number of research studies on ecstasy in learning grows, the number of studies on "learning disabilities" (which one could also define as "nadir experiences" in learning) might hopefully decline.

In thinking about the genius of children, I've been attracted to descriptive qualities that seem to further explicate this "response-ability" that stirs up from the depths the seeds of possibility and transformation in the child. These qualities include:

Curiosity: the innate ability of children to ask questions and instinctively explore what fascinates them in the world;

Creativity: their capacity to envision things in new combinations that elude the grasp of the average adult;

Wonder: the natural astonishment that children have on encountering the miraculous nature of the living world;

Wisdom: the almost sage-like quality of many children to ask age-old questions that touch upon philosophical, religious, and spiritual issues;

Inventiveness: the knack that children have to take random materials that don't seem to belong together, and put them together in some novel structure or pattern;

Vitality: the natural aliveness that children have toward the world, in contrast to the rather automatic "deadness" that characterizes the average worldly-wise adult;

Sensitivity: the exquisite sensibility that many children have toward suffering, beauty, harmony, order, simplicity, kindness, and other significant features of life;

Flexibility: the plasticity of the child's mind to move easily from one idea to another in a non-linear fashion in a way that gives birth to new avenues of thought;

Humor: the capacity of children to find something funny behind the most common or "serious" of subjects;

Playfulness: the ability of children to live and thrive in the nexus between reality and possibility, and from that middle place, to create something new for the world;

Imagination: the incredible facility that children have of perceiving in their mind's eye highly defined and articulated forms and images that serve as the basis for later artistic, scientific, and poetic discovery.

Joy: the natural upswelling of brilliant emotion that children experience in response to learning something new.

The above-mentioned qualities of genius are far more than simply cute metaphors to describe the "innocent" lives of children. They represent, on the contrary, the most important natural resources available to humanity. There are sound foundations for their existence, and for their importance to the world and its future welfare. Let me enumerate just a few of the most significant of these.

Neurological Basis of the Child's Genius

Very young children have nearly twice the number of neuronal connections and cerebral metabolic activity of adults. The child's brain is flexible: able to create specific neuronal pathways in response to specific environmental events. What better way to define the child's "response-ability" than through this unique capacity of the brain to tailor its architecture to its surroundings!

Evolutionary Basis of the Child's Genius

There is a predisposition as species evolve for youthful characteristics to be held into adulthood (this phenomenon is called "neotony" which means "holding youth"). For example, the forehead and chin of an infant ape look very human-like. But when that ape grows into adulthood, those human-like traits disappear. The same physical traits in a human infant, however, are held into adulthood. Hence, in the human being there is neotony for those two traits. According to the late Princeton anthropologist, Ashley Montagu, there are many psychological characteristics of children – including many of the qualities of genius listed above – which must be "held" into adulthood if our culture is to survive. For example, what will happen if the flexibility of childhood does not make it into adulthood (e.g., a possible, if not to say, likely, scenario: two inflexible countries with nuclear capabilities). Consequently, it may be vital to our continued survival as a species that we protect qualities in childhood like curiosity, flexibility, joy, and creativity so that these traits can be preserved into adulthood where they might provide tremendous adaptive potential in helping humanity to keep from blowing itself off the map.

Biographical Basis for the Child's Genius

If you listen to the acknowledged adult "geniuses" of different cultures share something of their own creative process, it is not uncommon for them to compare what they do to the work of young children. Picasso said: "I used to paint like Raphael, but it has taken me my whole life to learn how to paint like a child." Einstein wrote: "I sometimes ask myself . . . how did it come that I was the one to develop the theory of relativity. The reason, I think, is that a normal adult never stops to think about problems of space and time. These are things, which he has thought of as a child. But my intellectual development was retarded, as a result of which I began to wonder about space and time only when I had already grown up. Naturally, I could go deeper into the problem than a child with normal abilities." (Ronald Clark, *Einstein: The Life and Times*, pp. 27-28) This statement itself is a rather dramatic instance of neotony at work, and suggests that there is a creative power in childhood that all transformative thinking may ultimately draw upon for its vitality.

Phenomenological Basis of the Child's Genius

Recently, researchers have been formally investigating the kinds of experiences that Maria Montessori referred to as "the great work" or the activity of "the absorbent mind," such as the incident of the three-year-old girl cited above who focused so intently on her work with the cylinders and containers. In particular, a University of Chicago psychologist (now at Claremont Graduate School in California), Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, has coined the term "flow" to describe the experience of individuals, highly disciplined in their professions (e.g., surgeons, mountain climbers, artists and

others), who talk about those moments when they are most intently focused on their work. They seem to be describing the same kind of experience as Dr. Montessori did for young children: a state of absorbed alertness wherein the subject is oblivious to external stimuli, which upon termination, leaves the individual feeling refreshed and relaxed as if they had meditated or rested. In fact, Dr. Csikszentmihalyi has said that children frequently enter spontaneously into "flow" experiences, and some schools around the country have attempted to create these experiences more often through special "flow rooms" (for example, the Key Learning Community in Indianapolis, Indiana). In this regard, Montessori classrooms seem to have pioneered "flow rooms" long before these recent studies.

Having talked a little about the qualities of genius and their significance for life, I would now like to consider some of the factors that seek to shut down this genius, in other words, factors that interfere with the freedom of a child's "response-ability." I'd like to suggest that the source of these major impediments are threefold: the home, the school, and the broader society (popular culture in particular). Let me discuss them briefly.

Home Influences that Shut Down the Child's Response-Ability

Many children come from homes where depression, anxiety, racism, and other dysfunctional behavior serves to dull or paralyze their "response-ability" toward the world. How can a child be curious about the world, for example, when an addicted or violent adult slaps them for exploring their surroundings? Other children come from homes where there is tremendous poverty. If a parent is trying to feed their family or put a roof over their head, then there is no energy left to nurture this innate drive of the child to learn. Conversely, some children come from homes where there is plenty of economic and educational opportunity, but parents use their advantages to force knowledge down the children's throats. Child development psychologist David Elkind has coined a term the "hurried child syndrome" to describe children who are being forced to grow up too fast, and are coming down with physical, behavior, learning, and attention problems as a result of this kind of pressure to succeed.

School Influences that Shut Down the Child's Response-Ability

Schools today are increasingly walking away from the kinds of approaches, and values, that have characterized Montessori education for decades (that is, if they ever entertained them at all), and are adopting a far more industrial or corporate "results-based" attitude toward learning. Standardized testing has reached a fever pitch, where parents, teachers, and administrators seem more focused on the task of how to raise test scores, than on how to help children learn. The movement is toward less manipulatives, projects, and real life activities, and on more textbooks, worksheets, and other materials that mimic what will be on the tests. Attention to the developmental issues surrounding children, so important during the Piaget and Montessori-influenced 1960s and 1970s, seems to have all but withered away, with children who show developmental differences or learning and behavior difficulties, now being labeled as "LD," "ADD," "ADHD" and put into special education programs that purport to help them, but often just give them more concentrated doses of what they were failing at in the first place. And this, despite the fact that research suggests these kids often possess many of the genius qualities described above.

Popular Culture Influences that Shut Down the Child's Response-Ability

Finally, in the broader culture, children are exposed to so much mediocrity in the media, that they are like little toys in the hands of manipulative programmers, responding in knee-jerk fashion to the latest outbursts of inanity, obscenity, or violence. Television, video games, internet fare, and other features of high-tech culture for children are rarely geared toward developing their curiosity, creativity, inventiveness, or sense of wonder. Usually, they are designed to overstimulate kids to buy consumer products. Ready-made images and story-lines sap their imagination. Trite language constructions (compare the language in a play by Shakespeare, for example, to any recent episode of "Beavis and Butthead") stifle their linguistic genius and creative power.

Where is the child's genuine ability to respond in all of this? How can we help free the child from these and other enslaving forces so that they can once again do what God and nature have endowed them with the ability to do: that is, the ability to respond with joy, vitality, creativity, humor, flexibility, curiosity, wisdom, and wonder to the world around them? I'd like to suggest a few ways.

Free Your Own Response-Ability as an Adult

Physicians have stressed how important it is to watch one's diet and exercise so as to ward off conditions like stroke and arteriosclerosis, or hardening of the arteries. But there should be far more attention placed on another disorder – psychosclerosis, or hardening of the mind! When we, as parents, teachers, and educators, have gone rigid and lost our own innate love of learning, then this makes a tremendous impression on children. Why should they be interested in learning if we are not? On the other hand, if children see that we have managed to hold onto our own passion for discovery, our own curiosity to explore the world, our own imagination, and so forth (e.g., preserved these neotonous characteristics from childhood into our own adulthood), then we have accomplished a great deal toward helping them preserve their own "response-ability."

Provide Simple Experiences

This was the genius of Maria Montessori: that with simple learning materials children could open up to so much of their own potential. In today's educational marketplace, there seems to be such an obsession with making learning complicated (charts, booklets, worksheets, toys, gimmicks, and more all packaged into one commercially-viable "teach-your-student-to-learn-this" kit). However, when you ask the world's leading thinkers how they were inspired to follow their vocations, kits tend not to figure very highly! Frank Lloyd Wright said it was working with simple wooden blocks that led him to design buildings. Einstein reported that it was a simple magnetic

compass•that his father showed him when he was four years old. Martha Graham wrote that it was when her parents took her to a ballet at the age of fourteen. Nobel Prize-winning physicist Richard Feynman said it was the walks he took with his father in nature that filled him with a sense of curiosity toward how the universe works. In the classroom, it is often the quiet activity, the simple material, the incidental comment, or the accidental occurrence, that makes the big impression, the one that the student reports back to you ten years later ("you know when you read that poem to us, it made me want to be an English teacher!").

Create a Response-Able Climate in the Classroom

In classrooms where children must respond in rigid, contrived, or rote fashion to structured lessons, questions, exercises, and activities, there is clearly no freedom for them to exercise their "response-ability." Dr. Montessori's innovations of giving children the opportunity to make choices, to work at their own pace, and to be celebrated for their capacities as learners, unlocks their capacity to respond freely to the many different kinds of challenges that life presents to them.

Remember that Response-Ability Comes in Many Forms

Children respond in diverse ways to the astonishing universe around them. Research by Dr. Howard Gardner, at Harvard University, suggests that there are many ways to be intelligent, and that children show different "proclivities" in the ways that they develop with respect to these intelligences (linguistic, spatial, logical-mathematical, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic). Some children respond most intensely to nature, others to poems and stories, or math or science concepts, or pictures and images, or social experiences. While all children possess all the intelligences, and should be exposed to all of them on a regular basis, it is still helpful for us to recognize the individual differences that children have toward responding to different materials and activities in the classroom, so that we can provide those experiences most likely to have a direct "freeing" impact on their learning capacity. Certainly, in this respect, Dr. Montessori worked with a model of learning based on multiple intelligences long before that term was coined.

Finally, let me just say that while the guidelines above are prescriptive, there really is no easy answer to the question of how to free our children's "response-ability," because our society has become so complex, so fast-paced, so inappropriate in many ways to the true needs of children, that it would quite frankly take a miracle for things to change significantly in the child's favor. But, of course, this is exactly what the child is: a miracle! I think that if we, as educators, parents, and child advocates, can remember this – can remember Dr. Montessori's most fundamental message about who the child really is and how the child must be honored and respected – then perhaps we have the hope of salvation ahead of us after all. ■

Thomas Armstrong, Ph.D. is an award-winning author and speaker with 26 years of teaching experience from the primary through the doctoral level, and over 700,000 books in print on issues related to learning and human development. He is the author of eight books, including *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom*, *7 Kinds of Smart* and *The Myth of the A.D.D. Child*. He has written for *Ladies Home Journal*, *Parenting* and *Mothering*, among others, and has appeared on television and radio programs such as "The Today Show," "CBS This Morning," and the "BBC." Dr. Armstrong is currently writing a book on the stages of life.

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Poised for Success – Building Character and Citizenship in Children

John Rosemond

I'd like to start by sharing a true story. A woman comes up to me in Duluth, Minnesota after I had spoken at some length about this horribly frightening phenomenon that is occurring in America today. She took me over to the side and said, "I need to talk to you." I said, "Fine." She almost whispered, "I'm one of them." I said, "One of who?" "I have a child that's eight years old and hits me all the time. Can you help me listen to him? Can you help me understand why he's so angry at me?" And immediately I knew why he was hitting her.

This is just one example. This is the current American mentality. It's been psychologized over the last 30-40 years instead of doing something about it. People in the pre-modern era understood that children misbehaved. They did not need familial explanations, *pschobablistic* explanations. Children misbehave because it is our original nature to misbehave, period. The toddler comes into the world and he is a child. If you want to see human nature, look at a toddler. It's not a bad nature; it's just human nature. He doesn't want to do what he's told. He's self-centered. He throws tantrums when he doesn't get his way. He hits. That's human nature.

It takes a while to civilize this human nature. During the civilizing process, children misbehave. As you tune their social being, they misbehave. The people in the pre-modern era needed no other explanation than that. Grandma, which is the term I use to refer to the pre-modern parent, expressed it this way, "Oh, he's just a boy!" That was about as close to a psychological explanation as you got in 1935. "He's just a boy. Don't worry about it. Just do your job." But today's parents are paralyzed with psychological fears. Their children hit them and they think it's a psychological event that needs to be understood, analyzed, and worked with.

None of you hit your parents. I'd venture to say none of you did. The mere fact that you are here today is evidence of that. I'm being slightly facetious, but let's face it folks, Grandma nipped it in the bud. The first time it happened was the last time it happened. And is this in the child's best interest? Absolutely! It is in the child's best interest to stop anti-social behavior of that sort in its tracks as early as it can be stopped.

We're not doing this in America today. We're the first generation of American parents who have been led to believe that you can talk a child out of misbehaving. There is no evidence in the historical record that you can talk a child out of misbehaving. There have to be consequences. Children have to learn that this choice leads to this consequence and this choice leads to this consequence. In previous generations you learned this. You learned it at a very early age and this learning gave you freedom. You knew exactly what your parameters were. Within those parameters, within those boundaries, you could operate creatively as a child. You didn't have to be constantly guessing where the line is drawn today. And who's going to draw it. And if she says it's drawn, is it really drawn? And is it really drawn where she says it's drawn? And for how long is it drawn? This is what today's child is laboring under, and folks, that's not freedom. That's not freedom – that's anxiety. Today's children are expressing this anxiety because they don't know what the rules are in a variety of anti-social ways.

About 40 years ago in America our entire parenting paradigm began to shift. Prior to this time, if you were a parent in America and you began having a problem in the raising of a child, you didn't go to somebody like me. You didn't go to a psychologist or a clinical social worker, or a psychiatrist. You might have if you lived in some intellectual pocket in America, but in America, you just went down the street or across the field or through your backyard and you sat down with a member of your immediate extended family and you talked with an elder. Someone who had raised children, had the experience necessary to give you the advice you were looking for. You sat down with that person over a cup of coffee. It was probably a female. You shared a cup of coffee with her and you poured out your heart. "This is what's going on, what should I do?" And this woman, Grandma, gave advice that was based on a life she had led. It was advice that was down to earth. It was practical. It was consumable. You did not need a college education to understand what this woman was saying to you. You left Grandma's feeling reassured that you were capable of handling whatever it was you had brought to Grandma because Grandma said this in so many words. She probably never said these words specifically, but this is my translation. Grandma said what is as true today as it was 50 years ago, and that is, "There is nothing a child can do, ***nothing***, that a responsible adult cannot successfully deal with. Nothing." And folks, haven't we lost even that? Don't we think, as a nation of parents, that there are things our children can do that we can't handle? And this is why, you know, there's a place in this world for my profession. This is why my profession is thriving today. It is thriving today because we have uprooted the American parent from the soil of common sense, by creating the illusion that parenting is an intellectual, psychological process fraught with all sorts of psychological pitfalls, and if you don't read the books, you won't know where the pitfalls are. If you fall into the pitfalls you better read the books or you won't know how to get out of them. On and on this goes. And it's a craziness that's infecting the mind of the American parent. The American parent today can't think straight because of people like me. That is the truth. Because of people like me, the American parent can't think straight today.

You also left Grandma's after that

cup of coffee knowing exactly what to do, or pretty much what to do, because she said something like this, "Well, you know, as I recall, Uncle Charlie did something along those same lines and here's the way I handled it. And Uncle Charlie's fine today as you can see. If you go home and you handle it with Billie pretty much the same way, I think the outcome will be pretty much the same." You see these people didn't sit down and say things like, "When did you toilet train your child?" "With talking to you now, I'm beginning to get the impression that in the raising of your child, you are attempting to resolve outstanding issues from your own childhood and I think we'd better explore those issues and dimensions for awhile and pay me $100/hour for these excursions into what I call psychological archeology." You left with a clear sense of what to do. You left reassured. Okay now, when parents come to see people like me today, do you think they leave as reliably feeling reassured? Do you think they leave as reliably with a clear sense of direction? I don't think so. If they did, we would see parents acting with purpose. I see, in America today, very few parents acting with purpose – with a clear understanding of what this project is all about.

Let's make it very clear, as I do to my parent audiences all over America. You are not raising a child, you are raising an adult. Let's get it straight. This is not a day-to-day thing. This is a process that has a long-term objective. Get it clear in your mind what this long-term objective is. This is a 20-year plan, not a *this-week* plan. But that's what most American parents are thinking about. They're thinking about, "How do I get through this week?" And at the end of this week, "How do I get through the next week?" Grandma, in the raising of her child, emphasized character issues. She was focused on her child's character development. She really didn't care how many after school activities he was involved in. In fact, in those days, the parents' (and my mother was this way) favorite after school activity for their children was, "Go outside and find something to do and don't come home until dinner." That was your after school activity. And these children were supervised, but they were allowed a lot of freedom. Freedom to make choices and learn by trial and glorious, magnificent, indispensable error.

But Grandma didn't brag to her friends about all of the blue ribbons her child achieved in piano and soccer and so on and so forth. She didn't even really care whether he got into the gifted and talented program or not, which is why there were very few gifted and talented programs. There was no demand in the marketplace for gifted and talented programs. Fifty years ago if you went to school and complained of being bored, your mother probably looked at you and said, "I'll give you something to be bored about." It was your responsibility to get an education 50 years ago, not the teacher's responsibility to spoon-feed it to you. You were supposed to get it. It was a personal responsibility.

Grandma focused on character and citizenship issues in the raising of her child. She summed them up probably in a manner different from this. I call them *the three Rs* of child rearing. She was focused on teaching her child ***respect***. Now you teach a child respect for others by beginning to teach the child respect for your authority. The child learns respect for your authority first. Then he transfers that respect to other legitimate authority figures whom you identify for him: the teacher, the policeman, etc. Gradually this respect broadens and encompasses and becomes more egalitarian. Respect.

She was also focused on teaching her child ***responsibility***, the second of these three Rs, the willingness to accept responsibility for his own behavior as well as a willingness to accept tasks assigned by authority figures.

She was also focused on teaching her child to be ***resourceful***, the third of the three Rs. Respect, responsibility, and resourcefulness. A willingness to hang in there, tough it out, try and try again in the face of adversity. Grandma knew that regardless of IQ, a child who possessed respect, responsibility, and resourcefulness had all it took to succeed in the world.

I tell my parent audiences as I will tell you today – each and every one of you can conjure up in your mind right now a highly intelligent person who has made a complete mess of his life. Each and every one of you can conjure up such an individual. None of you can conjure up a person who is respectful, responsible, and resourceful who has made a mess of his or her life. These are people who fail; we all fail; we all have failures. But these are people who pick themselves up and move on. Their failures are not self-destructive nor are they destructive to other people. It's character that builds culture, not IQ, not how many ribbons you earn in after school activities. And we're losing this in America today. The American parent today thinks it's blue ribbons and IQ. Get them into the gifted and talented program, etc., etc., etc., when it's character and citizenship that builds culture.

Today we are focused on, courtesy of people like me, psychological developments. The paradigm has shifted from character development to psychological development. I will point out to you that as the shift took place, we left the realm of the measurable, the obvious, the concrete, the tangible. You didn't need a psychologist, and you still don't, to tell you if your child is responsible, respectful, and resourceful. We shifted to the abstract, the nebulous, and the theoretical when we started talking about the importance of something called self-esteem. There is great denial in my profession as to what this originally meant. If you go back to the books that were originally written on the subject of children and their self-esteem back in the 60s and early 70s, it's clear what these people were made of. If you were there and you watched the practice of self-esteem building in schools, it's quite obvious what was going on. Children were being lied to. It became a psychological crime to tell a child he had not done something as well as he could have done because a message like that might destroy his self-esteem. Self-esteem, summed-up, was, despite the denials, the attempt to make children feel wonderful about themselves at all times, in all situations. Wonderful.

I was in a school recently in Alabama speaking in an elementary school and I walked into the boy's restroom. There are no men on the faculty so no men's restroom. So I go into the boy's restroom, which is good because I wouldn't have seen what I saw otherwise. Above the mirror there was a

large computer generated banner, reading in big colorful letters that couldn't be ignored, "You are now looking at one of the most special people in the whole wide world." I thought, "Gag me with a spoon." What are we doing? Somebody said, "What's wrong with that, John?" What's wrong with telling a child he's one of the most special people in the whole wide world? Well, I believe there's a lot of validity to the ancient idea that you raise up a child in the way he will go. This message, which is intended for each and every boy in that school (and I assume that there is an equivalent message in the girl's bathroom), is the kind of message that is all over America in children's environments today. If these messages succeed, let me just point out to you what the consequences will be, and let me just bring this home by asking you a question. Would you be inclined to want to be friends with someone, an adult, who shortly after meeting them, it became obvious that this person thought he was one of the most special people in the whole wide world? Would you want to be friends with that person? No, in an adult, you see, that is a completely socially obnoxious quality. It is repulsive. Why are we telling children things like this? Well, that's a question for the people who ***said*** we should tell children things like this to answer. ***My*** answer is, we are telling children things like this because people in capital letters told us we should tell children things like this. You see, we began worshipping capital letters. One of the things we did was to create the myth – this is absurd – that a 32-year-old person with a Ph.D. in psychology, who has been married for four years and has one child age two, knows more about children and how to raise them properly than a 78-year-old woman with a fifth grade education who raised ten, none of whom have ever seen the inside of a jail. We actually created this myth. In so doing, we completely diminished, discounted, and denigrated, Grandma's common sense. We demonized the previous generation as well. We demonized pre-modern parenting, old-fashioned, and conservative, traditional parenting. We demonized the traditional family. We demonized the traditional marriage. We created the myth that all of these things were inherently bad and that if there is one thing that we baby boomers should not do, it is to recreate ourselves and our culture according to those molds.

Here is the myth. All of us baby boomers, most of you are, were raised in pathologically dysfunctional families by pathologically codependent parents who infected us with their co-dependence and abused us psychologically, if not physically. If you remember the abuse, you were abused. If you don't remember the abuse, then you were certainly abused. If you don't remember the abuse, you need to come to someone like me and we'll help you remember the abuse. You too can be a victim.

Now isn't that an attractive way to build culture? Grandma was focused on her child's behavior. She saw his behavior as the tangible, beautiful, measurable (if you will) out-springing of his character development. And she knew that if she *(I'm going to use the term in the positive sense; this is a term that has negative connotations, but I'm going to use them in a positive sense)* if she *manipulated* his behavior in the positive sense, she would reach into his character development in so doing. So she manipulated his behavior through the discipline process.

Today we are focused on the child's feelings. Notice how again, on this side of the coin, everything is concrete, everything is measurable, and everything is tangible. There are very few questions as to what's going on. Everyone agrees the child did this. But now we're going to the abstract, nebulous, and theoretical. Now no one can agree because the primary concern and consideration is, why did the child do it? What were his feelings when he did it? And then we lost it completely. In this case, the child was an independent agent acting with responsibility. In this instance, the child is the victim. He is driven to do what he does by psychological circumstances, or now, biological circumstances. Today the explanation for misbehavior is, well, it's either because the child is acting out some family dysfunction, or he is in the thrall of some genetic kink. There is no responsibility there folks, and that's the problem with these current diagnoses. Every single time you assign a diagnosis to a child, because of a behavior problem, you absolve the child of responsibility and you take away his freedom.

This is a horrible thing that is going on in America today, and the architects of it, let me assure you, are well-intentioned people like me. In 1955, if I misbehaved in school (I was in the third grade), it is conceivable that I would have been punished (not hit, punished) by four separate people that day. First, my teacher would have punished me. If I had done it before, whatever it was, then I would have gone to the principal. In first grade, it was the Mother Superior. I would have been punished again. Then a phone call would have been made to my mother and I would have gone home and been punished again. You see, in these people's minds, there was never enough. Then a phone call went to my stepfather and when he came home from work I was punished again. Not one of these people sat down with me and said, "Now John, before you did this horrible, awful thing that you did, can you get back in touch with the feelings that you were having so that we can understand and try and help you?"

This is what happens today. A child who misbehaves *(and I was not bad, I was invariantly mischievous; I had to be mischievous)* if some child today misbehaves mischievously as much as I did in the third grade, I can guarantee you folks, this child is going to eventually find himself in the office of a mental health professional who wants to talk about his feelings and understand why he is behaving the way he does. I can tell you why I behaved that way. It's very simple. The laughs that I was getting from 36 other students completely canceled anything the adults were doing. What's there to understand? But heaven forbid that there would have been psychologists around in my day because my family would have ended up being dysfunctional and I would have probably had some genetic kink and been put on medication of some sort.

You know what good parenting is going to be in about 25 years? Good parenting is going to be *(if we keep going in the same direction)* good parenting is going to be giving your child the right pill on time. That's where we're going in America. It's tragic where we're go-

ing in America. We're totally losing an understanding of who the child is. We're reducing the child to a mechanistic entity with freedom or responsibility. This mechanism needs to be adjusted with this chemical or that. We have created the designer child, with all of this chaos, anarchy. We have created the impression that child-rearing is hard. What a tragic thing to create the impression that child-rearing is hard. We have also, with the emphasis on feelings, created the impression that there is only one gender properly capable of understanding the new psychological parenting/child-rearing paradigm, and that is the female gender. I'm smiling because it is very risky for a man to stand up and talk about women these days. Interesting that women can stand up and talk about men, but the minute a man stands up and talks about women, he better look for the missiles. Here's what I think, and all the evidence supports this. Women are very feeling-oriented and men are not. Women are in touch with their feelings. It is true what they say about us men; we are not in touch with our feelings. There are exceptions on both sides of the gender divide, but these are general observations made by enough people that we can assume that the reliability attributes some validity to this. We men are not in touch with our feelings. A man has a feeling and gets over it. A women has a feeling and gets down into it. I think the difference is wonderful. The world would be rather boring or crazy if we were all one way or the other.

My wife understands people's feelings a whole lot better than I do. I'm a psychologist; she's got one year of college. I can't count, if I had ten hands, the number of times she has pointed out to me, how could I be so oblivious to someone else's feelings. It's not that I'm insensitive anymore than the average male, but I am insensitive. But no more than the average male. Men are emotional Neanderthals. Men and women, males and females, come into the world as newborns with eight crayons in their emotional crayon boxes. We all come into the world with red, orange, blue, green, purple, violet, black, and white. By the time a woman is 25 she has 64 crayons in her emotional crayon box. She has magenta, eight shades of yellow. It's a beautiful thing. It's an unpredictable thing. It's hard to figure out for us emotional Neanderthals sometimes, but it's a beautiful thing. A 25-year-old man is still functioning with the original eight. Let me assure you, several of the points have never been used. That's us men.

You see, the impression was created that the best parent is the parent who can walk into the child's feeling state most effectively and the parent who is the most sensitive to what's going on psychologically with this child. This is the impression that was created by people like me. When this happened, the female parent, who was reading all these books that were primarily designed for consumption by females, looked at her mate and said, "Well obviously, he's not going to be able to understand this. He can't understand my feelings." Grandma and Grandpa, the pre-modern parent couple, when it came to their perceptions of their children and their inclinations toward them, stood about this close together. Today, in many, many American homes there is a great gender divide in parenting. Grandma had no problem with Grandpa's discipline of the children as exemplified by something that anyone who grew up with pre-modern parents heard, and that was, "We're just going to wait until your father comes home." Said by a woman who could have handled the situation just fine thank you. She just decided, "No, you just crossed the line. I think I'll bring in the big guns." Bruno came wompering home at 6 o'clock and she said, "Sic 'em." When he disciplined the children, for the most part, he did not care how they felt about his discipline. In fact, he wanted them to feel bad. A child does something wrong, you want him to feel bad about it. You cannot talk this into him; it must be done with consequences that make him regret what he has done. So this is what Grandpa did. Grandma did it too. She did the same thing, but today's woman, because she has been brain washed by psychological propaganda that was designed for consumption by females, operates under this conundrum when it comes to the discipline of her children. Today's woman is trying to discipline her children without ever causing any discomfort or making them ever feel bad. I maintain this is impossible. You cannot instill conscience, a sense of social obligation, without causing the child remorse on occasion, regret, guilt even. These are all politically incorrect words to use in child-rearing today. If you want the child to stop hitting other children, you must make him feel bad when he hits other children.

I could go on and on and on. Today's woman is doing something that Grandma never did. There are exceptions to this too. I have to speak in general terms, but this is happening all too often so I speak about it. Today's woman is also running disciplinary interference between her husband and her children. Grandma said, "We're just going to wait until Grandpa gets home." Today's woman is doing this: "No, no, no. I'll handle it. You didn't read the book." And he didn't, because the book is all about his child's feelings, which he just can't relate to for more than two or three pages. Then he begins to see the same thing over and over again and wants to know if his *Sports Illustrated* has come. When you begin to feel as today's woman feels, that the entire weight of a project is on your shoulders, you become a micro-manager. This is the state of American female parenting in America today. Because we have led women to believe that there is only one gender properly capable of carrying out the new psychological parenting paradigm, specifically the female gender, the typical American mother thinks, "It's all up to me. If he's going to get into the right college, it's all up to me. If he's going to win the blue ribbons and get a scholarship, it's all up to me. If he's going to get good grades, it's all up to me."

Do you hear, folks, behind this, children are not responsible? The more responsibility the American female parent takes on her shoulders, the less responsible children become. The less they feel obligation to other people of any sort, social, task obligation, any sort of obligation. Children without obligation. Children without freedom. The two go hand in hand.

I was at an airport a couple of years ago and I'm standing curbside, having given my bags to the baggage handler. They checked my bags and I just stand there and I do what I like to do most, I

watch people. Not because I'm a psychologist, I'm a voyeur. A hotel van pulls up right next to the curb and discharges a mother and a father and a young boy about four years old. The mother says to the father, "You help him on with his book bag. I will check us in." Simple enough instructions. The husband begins to help him with his book bag. The mother walks over and she begins talking to the baggage handler over the counter, telling him how many bags they have, how many people there are, where they're going, what their flight sequence is. As she is talking, she's constantly looking around, saying a few things to the baggage handler and looking around. Every time she looks around, I can see that her eyes are bigger and her expression of concern is growing. Finally she goes, "Hold on just a minute." She walks over and she says, "That's not how to do it. You're putting hard things in the front of the book bag. If you put hard things in the front, as he walks through the airport, it will chafe his little shoulder blade. You have to put the soft things in the front of the book bag and the hard stuff in the back. I'll do it." She begins rearranging the things in the book bag so that he won't have a traumatic experience walking through the airport. The father just backs off. He is now standing next to me. He backs off, he looks at me, and I'm standing there kind of smiling, letting him know that I've seen it all. He gestured as if to say, "What's the use? In her eyes, I can't do anything right when it comes to the children."

Today's women really do believe it's all up to them. They come to manage the whole show and every aspect of it in order for it to turn out correctly. By the time the child was four years old, Grandma's job description sounded like this: *Grandma, your job is to see to it that your child is properly fed, properly dressed, that he's done his chores, that you know where he is, who he's with, and what he's doing, and you get him to bed at a reasonable hour.* That is micro-management. I daresay many of you were raised by women like that. How many of you were raised by a mother like that? Are you okay?

We don't let the modern American mother just do that. By the contemporary standard, and I call it the *mother bar* which American mothers have to try, if they want to be perceived as committed to their children, to clear every day. The bar just keeps going up. We don't let women just feed their children, clothe their children, know where they are, and get them to bed at a proper hour. Oh no, that's down right irresponsible, negligent parenting. So what you have in a typical American family, where there are two concerned parents, which most of you are dealing with, you have a parent who is in a micro-management frenzy, checking on everything because the American mother believes today the more she does for her child, the more attention she pays, the more she provides for, the more she fixes in his life, the better a mother she is. The American male has become the parenting aide. The real parent in the American family has a parenting aide, and he stands off to the side watching this frenzy of activity and every once in awhile the wife will turn to him and go, "Are you just going to stand there?" What's he supposed to do? In a project, two micro-managers in the same project will kill each other. So he stays out of the fray and occasionally she sighs and says, "I can't keep this up. You are going to have to step in for me for awhile, but I'll be watching you." Heaven forbid he make a decision on his own. This has become just so complicated when parenting is so simple.

I'm going to talk about the first stage of parenting for the rest of the time we have this morning, which isn't much but it's enough, and then I'm going to talk about the second and third stages in the break-out sessions. The first stage and the first transition take place during the first three years of life. The first stage is really 18-24 months of age. During that time the parent is a servant because the child is pretty dependent. The child makes a noise and we come to the child's side and basically ask, "How may I serve you, m' lord? How may I make you comfortable?" We roll these children through shopping centers and other public places. Perfect strangers come and kneel before you. Grandma knew that her service, although absolutely necessary in order to root this child securely in the world, in order to convince him he's taken care of, that he doesn't have anything to worry about, had paved the road to creating a monster. If she continued in this mode much past his second birthday, she would raise a totally unhealthy narcissist, also known as a spoiled brat.

Around the age of two, Grandma began bringing the curtain down on phase one of parenthood, servanthood. One of the most important things she did in this regard was something we are no longer giving American women permission to do. At age two what should be done (and is still being done in most of the rest of the world)? Very easily and simply because it's not a psychological process; it's a very practical thing you can do in three days to a week. Never raise your voice, never pop the child's rear end – what am I talking about? Toilet training, exactly. We've got people in America today that insult the intelligence of children by saying it's perfectly all right for a three-, four-, and five-year old intelligent human child to still be soiling and wetting himself. This is the state of professional parenting advice in America. Grandma knew the window of toilet training opportunity is most wide open between 18 and 24 months. If you can teach a four-month-old puppy to defecate and urinate only on a rectangle of newspaper on the kitchen floor within three days without ever yelling at the dog, ever hitting the dog, then by gosh you can do this equivalent with an 18-month human being – intelligent, creative, human being. It liberates the child, but it also liberates the mother. It is a mutual liberation and it enabled mom to shift from servanthood into authority figurehood, which is stage two.

You go through this transition between 24 and 36 months or thereabouts. You go through this transition where the child is clinging to the first stage that made him the *imperial potentate* all around the world. That's the way he's been treated for two years. He clings to this, he doesn't want to let it go. It's the child's perception of his mother that begs resolution. Let's get this straight. It's the child's perception of her authority because 99% of the time she has been the primary caregiver regardless of the relationship she has with her husband. It's the child's perception of her authority that needs resolution and Grandma resolved it. Grandma moved her child through this all-important transition in

the manner of a leader, so that by the time her child was three years old, he saw her with new eyes. Once a servant, now an imposing and somewhat intimidating authority figure who loomed large and loving in his life. Large and loving. We do not give the American female parent permission to move through this transition. The transition is moved through by the parent who communicates to the child three things basically:

1. *Child of mine: For two years I paid attention to you, now you are going to pay attention to me.* You cannot teach a child who is not paying attention to you. And your obligation is to teach, therefore you must secure the child's attention. And how do you do this? Very simple. You act like you know what you're doing. There's no psychology or magic to this. How do you get the attention of a child who doesn't pay attention to you, as two-year-olds are inclined to do? They want things from you; they don't pay attention to you. How do you get them to pay attention to you? You act like you know what you're doing. It's called leadership folks. You wrap yourself in the charisma of leadership. Once a servant, now a leader. If you've ever met someone wrapped in the charisma of leadership, you pay instant attention.
2. *You will do what I tell you to do.* That is necessary at this stage of the game. When I tell you to do something, you will do it, but I'm not going to micro-manage your life. I'm going to let you learn the hard way, by trial and error, but there will be certain instructions I give you and you will obey. You are free to disagree with me. This is absolutely necessary as an understated corollary to the second understanding. You are free to disagree with me, completely free to disagree child. I encourage your disagreement. You are never free to disobey. Free to disagree, free to question, never free to disobey. Freedom and responsibility, obligation, respect. It all has to start somewhere.
3. *You will do what I say, not because of bribe, brutality, persuasive explanation, reward, promise, complaint, or good reason. You will do what I say because I say so.*

Now people don't like that. I know people don't like that. They say, "Oh, come on, that's so out of favor." There are a lot of things that are out of favor that I enjoy. Frank Sinatra is out of favor. I enjoy Frank Sinatra. Big Band music is out of favor, but I enjoy Big Band music. *Because I said so* is out of favor and I think there's a place and a time for it. People say, "You should never give children explanations?" No, that's not what that means; not what that means at all. *Because I said so* is a backdrop to your authority. It's like it's written on the canvas back here, but I recommend that parents don't ever say it. You don't have to. You never have to say it for it to be the understanding. In fact, the more you say, the more you sound like a broken record, and no child wants to pay attention to a broken record. You just want to turn the broken record off, so don't say it. Remember you're free to disagree just not free to disobey.

Give children explanations, if we are talking about an explanation concerning a rule as opposed to an explanation concerning a natural event – like sunrise or trees that are green in the summer. Focusing on explanations for rules, you will never be asked for an explanation if the child likes the rule; you are never asked for an explanation if the child likes the decision the adult has made. You say to your 15-year-old daughter, "Oh sure you can go to New York for the weekend with an 18-year-old-boy I have never met. Sure!" Your 15-year-old daughter is not going to look at you and go, "Why?" They only want explanations for decisions they don't like. And this is very important because from this flows a second principle. This is a fact, not a theory. If the child does not like a decision you have made, the child is not going to like the reason you give to support it. Why not? I'll tell you why not. Why not is A, B, and C. Under the circumstances, has the child ever gone, "I get it now? How could I have been so thickheaded? It's so clear and it's so plain. I can read between the lines that you're doing this because you love me." If they don't like the decision, they don't like the reason. But go ahead and give it to them. They're only six. This is so simple. You're only answering the *why nots* basically. The six reasons are: you're not old enough, you might get hurt, there's not enough money, there's not enough time, we don't believe in that, we don't like those kids. It doesn't matter which explanation you give them, the right or the wrong one, the child's not going to agree with it. Give them any reason.

About a year and a half ago, just to illustrate this point, I said, "Write each explanation on a scrap of paper, hold them all up, put them in a goldfish bowl and when the child asks why not, just walk over and pick one. I was doing this just to illustrate that it doesn't matter which explanation you use, the child is going to figure it out. There are some people who honestly think if you don't tell the child the real reason you will end up doing harm. But let me ask you this, how many of you grew up with parents who wouldn't give you any explanations at all? It was always because I said so. How many of you? Right. You folks, when you got to a certain age, you could figure all the answers out. Every single one of them. You are not walking around the world today going, "Excuse me, you look intelligent. My parents wouldn't let me go to my friend's house when I was six years old and they still haven't explained this to me. Can you help me with this? I can't move on with my life unless I get an explanation."

I started doing this goldfish bowl thing about a year and a half ago. About six months later, some guy calls me from Connecticut. He wants to put together a goldfish bowl and explanations on scraps of paper, package and sell them at my speaking engagements. This is really weird. A joke turns into a marketing outlet. But there are people who e-mail me all the time and are using the goldfish bowl. A woman from Connecticut said it had been liberating. Now her 6-year-old, as soon as she starts for the goldfish bowl, goes, "Just forget it then." You know we don't give children enough credit. How many times have one of you said to a child who asked you a question, "I think you can figure that out." I know you guys do. You know, you're the exception. Most American parents won't look at their children and go, "You can figure that out. You don't need me answering

that for you." They answer it. You know that's not the way to deal with it.

We're on to parental authority. Like all parents I can tell you how to stop arguments with children just like that. Freedom. Freedom to the parents, freedom to the child. The child that constantly feels the need to argue because he's given the opportunity to argue is the child who's anxious. This is not freedom. This is bondage. Let's free this child. How do you free this child? End arguments. How do you end arguments? Make a decision the child doesn't like. If the child demands an explanation, give him an explanation. He's only six. Now you come to a fork in the road because he doesn't like the explanation. "That's really dumb; stupid; I hate you!" Whatever.

Now you come to the fork in the road. The people who take this fork go down argument alley. They try to explain themselves to their children and they try to get their children to say, "I get it." Lots of parents give children that opportunity. To come back when they're 21 or 25 and go, "Now I get it." It's a wonderful proclamation. It's a wonderful experience. It's a wonderful memory.

Parents who take the other fork never get into arguments with their children. When their children say, "I don't like that explanation – it really stinks," they look at their children and they go, "Hey, if I was your age, I'd feel the same way. No problem." And then do you know what they do? They walk away.

Does it work with teenagers? Sure. My son was 15 years old; he came to me and said he wanted to talk about getting a motorcycle. This was going to be the shortest conversation we've ever had. "You won't be getting a motorcycle, not this year, next year, the year after that. You can't have a motorcycle. If you are living in our house and you have saved enough money to buy yourself a motorcycle, plan carefully because the day you buy the motorcycle is the day you move out. This is not punishment, don't misconstrue this as punishment. Here's the way I feel about it and your mother feels the same way. Anyone who is old enough to make that big a decision needs to be free. So the day you buy a motorcycle is the day you move out." "Dad, all of my friends are getting them." "Well then, you are going to be the most special child in the area."

"Why not, Dad?"

"I'll tell you why not. Motorcycles are dangerous and you're not old enough to appreciate the danger and you won't be for many years to come."

"Dad, I know they're dangerous. I promise, I'll be careful."

I'm not going to sit down with him and try to explain the contradiction in his own words. You can't get a 15-year-old to think like an adult. To think like an adult you have to have adult experiences. You have to have the material with which to think like an adult. So at this point I simply said *(by the way, if you never get in an argument with your children, you'll never say things you'll regret – it's wonderful)*, "Eric, if I was 15, I'd want a motorcycle too. If I came to my parents and asked them for one, they'd have said the same thing I just said to you. What's funny to me is, I would have said the same thing to them that you just said to me. Now you aren't going laugh about this, but I am and it would be rude of me to stand here and laugh in your face." I turned and began walking out of the room. Eric said, "Dad, you aren't going to walk away from this one. We're not done." I said, "Eric, I forgot to say one thing. We're done." He didn't speak to me for three days. It was a blessing. A woman e-mailed me about two months ago regarding her 13-year-old daughter. She hadn't spoken to her in a week. What should she do? I e-mailed back, "Take the vacation."

I go out in the country and I speak from the perspective of someone who has been a psychologist and has seen that the good intentions of my profession at this point in time have created havoc and chaos in parenting in America. Not all of us, but the mainstream of my profession I think, has done a lot of harm in America to how children are handled in this country. I think from the perspective of somebody who has been married for 32 years to the same woman, and I speak from the perspective of someone who has children who are 31 and 27, both married, both with children, and I speak from the perspective of someone who is, although living in the year 2000 at the age of 53, not a modernist, but somewhat of an activist. An old-fashioned person – someone maybe out of place and out of time. I don't say anything new as I go around the country. What I try to do is put my audiences back in touch with a clear unmystified understanding of what the pre-modern parent had in mind. It has all been demonized and the demonization has been largely, I daresay 99%, completely unfair. I try to put my audiences back in touch with this because I think that the salvation of culture in America, if there is such a thing, is the restoration of the citizenship ethic when it comes to raising children. Does this mean we don't need people like me? No. People like me can still have space somewhere in here, but I dare say we try fill the whole space. If we return to a citizenship ethic then we're not going to be that useful in the general sense. I'll leave you with one thing, one quote from the scriptures: "There is nothing new under the sun." Thanks for inviting me here.

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Bringing Out the Best in Your Child: Achievement Begins at Home

John Rosemond

There are, in my estimation, three stages to parenthood. Between these three stages there are two very distinct transitions. Actually there are three transitions. Stage one is the stage of *servanthood*, which is from birth to two years of age. Then you go through an all-important transition in which you re-define yourself to the child and in so doing you re-define who he is. That transition takes place between 24 and 36 months, if you're on schedule. Very few people are on schedule anymore. All of this was done very intuitively in the pre-modern era. We have to be explicit today because we have lost touch with the intuitiveness of it. At the end of this transition, if you have stayed the course, and you know what the curriculum is during that transition, you'll have a child that sees you with new eyes. He sees you as an authority figure. Your job is to communicate to him understandings that will form the foundation of your authority. Your authority is essential to his being able to assume authority over his own life. He cannot do this without a model and you provide the model. I talked earlier about those understandings. First, you'll pay more attention to me than I'll pay to you, generally speaking, but you'll get all the attention you need. Number two, you'll do what I say, but you're free to disagree. Number three, you'll do what I say, not because I persuade you to, or belittle you into doing it, or harangue you into doing it, or threaten you into doing it. You'll do what I say because I tell you to do it. It's as simple at that. That is the way the pre-modern parent arrived at a point by 36 months where they could honestly say that their children were no longer throwing tantrums, no longer actively defying their authority, no longer acting like toddlers.

Toddlerhood was over by age 36 months. One of the most disturbing aspects of America's child-rearing culture today is that toddlerhood is *never* over in many cases. I have observed that many American parents are raising perpetual toddlers. There are toddlers at two, 6, 10, and still at 14. They act like toddlers, they think like toddlers. A toddler is a narcissist. A toddler, a beautiful human being, but sometimes I'm very, very blunt in my description of children and my bluntness is misinterpreted by people as I don't like children or I have a negative attitude toward children. No. I'm just a realist where children are concerned. I think the more realistically we appraise and apprise children, the more loving we will be toward them. It is the lack of realistic perspective that causes adults frustration. To express that frustration toward children is the lack of realistic expectations. A narcissist believes that what he wants, he deserves. That is a toddler. A narcissist believes the ends justify the means, and that is a toddler. Toddlers hit, steal – they're amoral. What we are raising in America today, by all accounts and evidence, are children who are perpetual toddlers. These are children who, at the age of 12, 13, 14, still believe that what they want, they deserve and the ends justify the means. Because we are no longer on schedule in parenting in America, because we no longer intuitively understand the stages and transitions involved and the timing of it, parenting is like comedy. Timing is everything and if you're on time, by the way, it's kind of fun, like comedy. If you're not on time, your timing is off and it is stressful. We no longer understand the intuitive nature of these stages and these transitions. You establish authority over the child so that he has a template within which to begin establishing authority over himself at an appropriate age. It's called emancipation and emancipation is not an event that occurs when a child is 18, 19, 20, 21, 22. Emancipation is a process that begins at the age of 24 months.

Essential to this process is the toilet training of the child. It is absolutely shameful that we are not toilet training, in this country, children by the age of 24 months. It's absolutely shameful that we are creating the absolutely fictitious myth that toilet training a child before the age of 24 months requires undue force, as I was told on *CBS Later Today* by a pediatrician who debated the topic with me – that to do this requires undue force. Folks, the fact of the matter is that most of you in this room were toilet trained by 24 months by parents who used no force whatsoever. They did what you do. You do this to toilet train a human being. You set the stage properly, you communicate properly, and you respond properly to mistakes. It's that simple. It is shameful that we're not doing this anymore. It is shameful that people with reputations that are unquestionable in the minds of many are promoting this idea, because it extends the toddlerhood of children, which is criminal.

So then, around the age of 36 months, you enter into stage two – your *authority figurehood* stage. Here's how the old-fashioned parent talked to children. "Sit down right here. We are going to have a conversation and you may listen. You are not invited to speak, but if you're quiet, you may sit and you may listen." Did you hear that? We don't talk to children like that anymore – that's not nice. I was a guest in someone's home the other day and the children were eating with the adults, which I didn't understand. The kids are five and three. I didn't understand why they were eating with the adults on a special occasion, but that's me. The three-year-old, as soon as he's served and no one else is sitting at the table, (and why you serve the three-year-old is beyond me, but) he immediately picks up his fork and begins to eat. Here's the way I would have dealt with that. "Billy, it is not polite to start eating until everyone is seated and has their food. That is a rule. Put your fork down until everyone is seated and has their food." That's the way you talk to a three-year-old. He understands that, so that's how you talk to him. His father came over and said, "Billy, wouldn't you rather wait until every-

one is seated and we can all eat together?" And he kept right on eating. This is the way parents talk to their children today. If you count the number of "okays..." Count the number of "okays," just if you're around parents during the day. It's this totally non-authoritative form of communication because today's parents believe that to talk straightforwardly to a child, to respect his intelligence, is somehow not nice. It's mean. So do we get the results that parents of 50 years ago got? No. Are children as happy today? No. By all accounts, the rate of childhood and teen depression has increased by a factor of 10 since 1965. You can say what you will about traditional parenting, and certainly it was not a perfect state of affairs, but guaranteed, the outcome was a better outcome for children. Children were less violent, less aggressive. They were happier as a lot. They did better in school with less help than our children are getting today. Anyway you look at it, the outcome was better for kids, so you can argue and pick traditional parenting apart and you can say that there was this success. But that success didn't define the philosophy of the practice for the most part. It was the philosophy, the idea behind it. There was a sense of mission to traditional parenting. A sense of mission and long-term purpose that we have lost.

So from age three to age 12 or 13 you're in the *authorityhood* stage. During this time, it is essential that you communicate three more understandings to children. It takes about a year to communicate the first set of understandings. You'll pay more attention to me than I pay to you. You'll do what I say because I say so. That takes about a year. Children understand that in about a year if you stay the course. Now the second set of understandings is more difficult – it's more difficult to get across to children. In fact, it could well be said that no one ever really understands this. You do as good a job as you can and the real world is going to have to do the rest. The three understandings that it is your responsibility as a parent to communicate are:

• *Child of mine, you are completely responsible for every decision you make.* You are the agent of your decisions. You are the agent of your behavior. It is not our divorce. It is not your father's alcoholism. It is not your allergies. It is not your ADD. It is you. As Grandma used to say, "There are no excuses." I believe that. I don't care what kind of mantle of *victimhood* we want to drape children in, every single one of these mantles is an illusion. It conceals who this child really and truly is. It conceals him from himself as well. "

• *If you make bad decisions, bad things will happen.* These understandings enable the child to take control of his life. I am responsible for every decision I make. If I make bad decisions, bad things will happen. By the way, it's bad things will happen *sooner or later*. One of the things you have to get across to children, because they are short-term oriented, is that bad things will not always happen right away. That doesn't mean a bad thing isn't going to happen. If you're my age, you realize that at the age of 53 it is possible for something bad to begin happening because of something you did when you were 20. The earlier we can get this across to children the better.

• *If you make good decisions, child of mine, then good things will happen.* Yes? That's it. I let the audience fill in the blank because inevitably everybody in the audience says, "Good things will happen." This, by the way, is a secular point of view. If you do the right things, good things should happen. That's the track we've been on in parenting for the last 40 years. It's been a secular parenting track. The exemplary of this is the insane habit that we have of putting stars on charts when children do the right thing, counting up the stars and giving them prizes and all this other stuff. The reality, as any mature human being knows, *(and it's our job to pass reality down to our children in a way that is digestible and understandable, so perhaps they won't have to experience quite the knocks that they would otherwise have to experience as adults)* the reality is that if you make good decisions, bad things are less likely to happen. It's hard to be a good person because there are no guarantees that if you are a good person, anything good is going to happen. You could be a bad person and there's a guarantee that bad things are going to happen sooner or later. Why should I be a good person? People with a fantasy are people who become depressed, suicidal, morose, bitter, etc. This ethic was part and parcel of our culture and it was because of this ethic, I submit, that thousands upon thousands of young men threw themselves on the beaches of Normandy in 1944. These guys knew. If you do the right thing, it doesn't mean good things are going to happen.

In my estimation it is more important that you teach a child a service ethic than the work ethic. If you have a choice, teach the service ethic. The work ethic will come along. The service ethic is, "I'm going to do this because it is the right thing to do regardless of the cost to me of doing it." I think we have lost this because we don't teach the service ethic in the family anymore. How did you get these things across to your children? You got these things across to children through practice. You used the family as a workshop for citizenship. First of all, notice that between the second and third birthday, the center of attention in the family shifted from child to parent, as it still should. As the child's perception of the mother's role was revised, he began to see that his mother was not in a primary relationship with him, but with his father. This is very important. Prior to this time the child has every right to believe that he owns his mother. The pre-modern mother revised that and the child began to see that the marriage was primary, not the mother-child relationship. Today's children believe that, whether they can express it or not, because most women act like the mother-child relationship is the most important in the family. Most women divorce their husbands the day their first child is born. It didn't used to be this way. I'm not talking about women. I'm talking about what's happened to women. Let's keep that very straight, otherwise you'll begin thinking this guy's anti-women or sexist. I'm not. No more than the average 53-year-old. Most of you grew up in families in which it was very clear from an early age that the relationship between your mother and your father was where it was. Most children today are growing up in families in which it is equally clear that the "where it's at" relationship is the relationship between the child and his mother. Today's mother stays rooted in the role of servant indefinitely. We have not given women of this generation per-

mission to make the transition from *servanthood* to *authority figurehood*, on time, on schedule, with purpose – to communicate to their child, I run the show and I run it in a way that you may not like.

First thing that happened was (and this helps the child divest of self-centeredness, which is essential), the center of attention shifted from child and the mother-child relationship, to the parent and the marriage. It is only within that context that children can learn respect for authority. In the 1960s I fell under the sway of hyper-liberal ideas of raising your children. I believed that to teach a child respect for authority was equivalent to teaching this child to be unquestioningly submissive to authority. There is no equivalency there whatsoever. I went to college in the late-1960s and most of us were raised by parents who commanded our respect. There were a good number who demanded it, which is the wrong way to go about it. Most of us were raised by parents who commanded our respect. They had an aura of authority about them that just captured you. We were a generation that grew up, and when it came time, questioned everything. We probably questioned more than we should have. There is no equivalency between teaching a child respect for authority and trampling on this child's ability to question. All of the founding fathers, who were people who thought in new ways, were people who were raised by parents who commanded their authority, commanded their respect through the proper use of authority.

The second thing that happened was that the pre-modern parent, after securing the child's attention, put the child to work. Here we have the service ethic beginning to emerge. I was speaking before an audience of about 800 people in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania about three years ago. The people who come to hear me talk generally pay something – it's in the evening. They have to drive, get home early from work, hire baby-sitters on weeknights, etc. You have to understand that I do not speak to a cross-section of American parents. I speak to a cross-section of American parents who want to do a good job. They demonstrate their willingness to do a good job by getting baby-sitters and inconveniencing themselves and driving 20 miles and paying $10 or whatever to hear me speak about child-rearing. That's the type of audience I'm speaking to.

I asked the audience to raise their hand if this statement is true of you when you were a child. "In your family, when you were a child, every child above the age of three was clearly expected to perform a daily routine of chores around the home. These chores had to be done and they had to be done properly or they were going to be done over again by you. For doing these chores you received no payment whatsoever of any kind. No stars on charts accumulating to special privileges, no money, nothing. You did these jobs because you were a member of your family." I asked this audience of 800 people to raise their hand if they could say that's the way it was when they were a kid. I would say 650 hands went up. Now take the clock forward 30 years and I want you to answer this question. "Today in my family every child is clearly expected to perform a daily routine of chores around the home. These chores have to be done properly or done over again and the children are not going to be paid in any way, shape, or form. They do these chores because they are members of the family." How many of you can raise your hands and say that's the way things are in my family? I would say 20 responded, but about 10 of the 20 raised their hand tentatively, like this… *liars*.

This is what's going on in America today. We have lost a sense of mission and purpose. This is nothing more than indicative of the fact that we're trying to get through week by week. How many weeks of this is left? Can I get through this week? Today's parents are thinking no further than Saturday. Maybe to the report card. Yesterday's parents were thinking, "What kind of individual do I want to claim as my child when this individual is 25 years old?" Our collective attention span has shortened, and shortened because we are now a nation under television. My mother was a single parent for most of the first seven years of my life. She commanded my attention. How did she command it? She commanded it by acting like she knew what she was doing. Here is my body language portrayal of the pre-modern mother. Here she is… She was a loving woman, but she was stern. You knew she loved you, but she was a stern person. This is why the look worked. Can you imagine how wonderful it is for both parent and child for the look to work? It saves so much effort and energy. All you have to do is just look and it stops. Here's my portrayal of the modern mother… Again, this is not about women. If this were about women it would have been like this. This is about what's happened. This is the most paradoxical generation of American females to ever inhabit this culture. They have liberated themselves economically, educationally, and professionally, while they have indentured themselves to their children. It is the most paradoxical situation. I'm convinced that today's children are learning absolutely no respect for women. That's scary. We have stripped women of permission to look like this…

How many of you were raised by a mother who never yelled? You obeyed her, but she never yelled. She may have raised her voice occasionally, but her voice never went cracking through the sound barrier. Is there a woman in the room today with children living with her in the home who can say that they obey her as well as she obeyed her mother and, "I never yell?" Do you realize the significance of what we're talking about here? We're talking about women who are yelling because they have no authority in their relationships with their children. They are trying to be their children's friends. The American father, in order to keep the peace, plays right along by trying to be his children's best buddy. These kids are growing up in families in which there is no authority. They act like wild Indians. They come to school having never learned to pay attention to authority figures and take them seriously. They come to school having never performed any regular tasks around the home.

"Fails to pay attention, fails to complete his work." What are we talking about? Attention deficit disorder. Thomas Armstrong talked about this yesterday. You cannot take a child and fail to train him to pay attention to adult authority, and fail to train him to accomplish things upon direction, and put this child into school after six years

of this lack of training and expect that this child is suddenly going to pay attention and do his work. It's absurd.

People say that ADD was always around. Okay, I'm in Coral Gables, Florida two years ago August doing a workshop for the parochial schools of South Miami. Mostly, there are teachers, counselors, and administrators. During the break in the workshop in the morning, a woman, who I estimated to be of my mother's age, walks up and begins to talk to me. She tells me that she began teaching in 1947. In 1950, she said that they gave her 70 first graders. I looked at her I thought, "No. They gave you 70 first graders and maybe an aide, or a couple of aides, or maybe there were three teachers in the same room." She said it was she and 70 first graders. I asked how in the world did that happen and she told me that there were supposed to be two classes of 35, but the day before school started, the other teacher called and reported that her husband had been transferred and she could not fulfill her obligation. They gave all 70 to the one teacher. There was a baby boom and a teacher shortage in 1950. Teachers were not lined up outside of schools waiting for positions to open. You had to go beat the bushes for teachers. They said she'd have to take all 70 until they found a replacement. You cannot turn away 35 children tomorrow at the door.

Okay. They moved all the kids to the biggest classroom and lined the chairs and desks in seven rows of 10 and she began teaching 70 first graders. Many of these first graders were children of immigrants who either did not speak English, or did not speak it well. Most of these children had never been to any sort of pre-school experience at all, much less Kindergarden. Most of these children came to school as did I, not knowing their ABC's. I don't know how many of you realize that. My mother taught me the song, but if somebody said, "All right, here's a mishmash of letters of the alphabet, find the M," I couldn't have done it. You came to school in first grade and you were taught. In that context, she said that after six weeks, when they realized she was having no problems at all, they decided to save money and leave them all year long. She taught 70 children without an aide and she said that every single one of those children learned to read and write well enough to go to the second grade.

I tell the story only because I want you to understand that one parenting paradigm which was embedded in our culture 40+ years ago produces one outcome. Another parenting paradigm which is embedded in our culture today produces an entirely different outcome and there are actually naive people who believe that we can just fine-tune this paradigm and get it to work. No, folks. There ain't no amount of fine tuning that you can do to this. Our only alternative at this point is to create a movement which lures parents into this paradigm. If we can get people back into this paradigm, then we can clean up the excesses and fine tune then. This is never going to work no matter how much fine-tuning we do. It is worthless as far as I'm concerned. It is the bane of our culture. By the time I was four years old my mother had taught me how to wash floors. By the time I was five she had taught me how to operate her washing machine and wash my own clothes. How many four-year-old children in America today are washing floors? My mother did not say to me on that first day that she taught me how to wash the floor, "You know, I think we can play a game today. It's called washing the floors." Knowing my mother she said something to this effect, "John Rosemond, you are old enough to learn to wash floors. I've got a lot to do today and I'm going to teach you how to wash floors." That's how you taught the children. If you talk to children like that I guarantee that the likelihood they will do what they're told increases by tenfold.

I didn't regard my life as anything unusual. Everyone else was working for their mothers. There was none of this business of quality time and you have to be your child's playmate and stuff like this. It was *mother liberation*. The child was expected to entertain himself. Don't you dare come to me and tell me you can't entertain yourself, child of mine. I'll find something for you to do. You learn very quickly that the something in question was something you didn't want to do. My mother had a phrase, *underfoot*. Underfoot was when I was bothering her and she had things to do. Women in those days didn't have any problem saying to their children that they were bothering her. We don't give women permission to say that to children anymore. What is wrong with that? Nothing. If you just speak straightforwardly, you never have to scream. They listen. The five or six other kids who had been kicked out of their houses and I didn't form a rejected children's support group. It's a wonderful thing not having adults constantly micro-managing. Do you know how few children grow up today without adults micro-managing? A lot of the ones who do grow up this way grow up in horrible circumstances. I grew up in good circumstances and I had a mother who was responsible, loving, and she never micro-managed me. In this anecdote there is a vision. My mother has a Ph.D. in plant morphology. She is a brilliant woman. She is a scientist, she is a mathematician. She is smart. I came to her when I was in the fifth grade and said that I was having trouble with this math problem. She took the book and she looked at it and said that it was interesting. "They are teaching this the same way they taught it to us when I was your age." She turned the book around, handed it back to me and said, "I figured this out. So can you." Right there the modern mother and my mother go in two different directions. I looked at my mother with this sense of shock. Here's this woman who could have solved this problem in her head, told me how to do it, cleared up all of my confusion in the proverbial heartbeat, and she said that. She said, "Let me remind you, John Rosemond, when I was your age I was in an orphanage. I had no one to go to. I figured this out and so can you." I looked at her and I said, "Mom, I'm not in an orphanage." She refused to help me. Just as simple as you please. No attempt to explain. Storm clouds came across her face. She fixed me with that stare and she said, "Don't you ever say that to me again. Don't you ever tell me you've been working on something for 45 minutes and can't get it." What's wrong with that? She said, "I've been working on some problems in my life for four or five years now and haven't figured them out."

Okay. There's a mother you respect. I used her as an example because she is the only close at hand example I

have and I tell the story to people of my generation and almost inevitably they have a story like that about their mother. It's really a story about the attitude that these people had. It was a long-term vision that they had for their children and every parenting occasion became an occasion to further the mission. Resourcefulness was built into children by letting them learn their lessons the hard way. By letting them go through the trial and error of what's involved in any significant learning process. By letting them fail. By letting them fall flat on their faces. There were expressions back then that said, I want you to accept responsibility for everything you do; I want you to figure out your own problems; I want you to learn to stand on your own two feet. They were expression like this, "You made this bed, you lie in it." These are things we don't say to children anymore. If you came home complaining about a teacher, your mother wouldn't go to school. She'd look at you and tell you that you'd better get a good grade from him or you'll be in big trouble with me. You'd better go to school tomorrow and figure out how he's going to like you. That's what they would say to you. You went to school with a sense of responsibility. You weren't a victim and your mother wasn't going to let you characterize yourself as one and she wasn't going to treat you as one. "I knew if I gave you enough rope you'd hang yourself." A clear statement that these people were not micromanaging their children. They saw their children getting into trouble and they did nothing. The noose would tighten. It was a wonderful thing. You look back on these times as an adult and these are the memories that you cherish and one of the things that I tell my audiences today is that we are not giving our children memories to cherish. The memories that you cherish are when your parents didn't come to your assistance. The memories that you cherish are when your parents held you completely responsible for your own behavior – where they built a trap for you, you fell into the trap and they wouldn't let you out. Those are the things we cherish as adults. We laugh about these things. Today's parents are giving their children nothing to laugh about when they grow up. Nothing.

Let's talk a few minutes about television and then we will dismiss. Television. How is it that 70 children in Coral Gables, Florida can come to school in 1950 and lock their attention onto a teacher and pay attention under the most adverse circumstances? Having to sit relatively still in individual desks which were horribly uncomfortable. How could 70 children do this and learn to read and write well enough to go to second grade? I submit, because these children had long attention spans. It is comforting to think, if you are the parent of a child who has been diagnosed with ADD, that your child's problems have absolutely nothing to do with any decisions you have made other than the decision concerning who to marry. That this is a genetic problem. It's very comforting. It's discomforting to hear what I believe to be the truth. This is a developmental issue. It's not a genetic issue. That during the most critical years of brain development we are exposing children to a medium that has as one primary predictive effect, the shortening of attention span. Those 70 kids came to school and probably not one of them had ever seen a television set except maybe in a store window. Today's child comes to first grade having watched in excess of 5,000 hours of TV, which means he spends about one fourth of his discretionary time in front of the TV set. Television is creating a primary developmental environment for children. The question is, how is it effecting development? That question can be answered to a great degree by simply looking at the medium itself. Not the content, the medium. Every television program flickers every few seconds. Scene changes flicker. Sometimes faster, sometimes slower, but the average interval is 3.5 seconds when you take all programs into effect. Cartoons are more rapid. I submit that you cannot expose the developing brain to this stimulation for any significant period of time and not compromise attention span. So, I think we're producing an attention span epidemic with television and also in combination with television, faulty parenting practices that fail to teach children to pay attention and complete any tasks at all. If you look strictly at our parenting practices and television as a medium, you find the diagnosis of attention deficit disorder.

In the fifth grade in High Ridge School in West Chester, Illinois, Anthony came to school mid-year. Within a couple of weeks it became obvious that Anthony could not sit still, pay attention, and do his work. Anthony stands out in my mind because this is the first time I've ever seen a kid who simply can't sit still, pay attention, and do his work. About two weeks after Anthony arrived, Mr. Colstead just walks into class one day dragging a big refrigerator box. He takes it up to the front of the class at Mrs. Colstead's instruction, cuts out the back of it, puts a desk in the box, and Anthony did his work in the box. Anthony got his work done in the box. Some people would object to Anthony being in the box. Anthony was not in the box all day. He was in the box when he needed to do his work. He got his work done in the box. That's all that matters to me. The box did the trick. Of course you can't do the box today because it hurts their self-esteem. Never mind that they get their work done in the box. Apparently their self-esteem is more important than competency. Every once in awhile, Mrs. Colstead would say, "Anthony, in the box." He would come up and get in the box.

This is the first time (I'm 11 years old and it's 1958) that I've seen a kid like this. Where did all of these ADD children come from if it's genetic? Anthony? Our son Eric was the worst behaved child in his third grade class. We went in for a conference in January of 1979 and Mrs. Stewart said, "Mr. and Mrs. Rosemond, not only is he the worst behaved child in my class, he is the worst behaved child I have seen in 20 years of teaching." He was impulsive, he threw tantrums, he was explosive on the playground, he had a short attention span, he rarely finished his class work, and we had homework marathons every night at the kitchen table. By today's standard, he'd be diagnosed with ADD, no question about it. One year later, his fourth grade teacher said he was one of the most well behaved, most well mannered, mature children she had ever taught. He was reading a year above grade level. During this year he took no medication, received no counseling, no tutoring, no special attention or consideration of

any kind at school. What happened between January 1979 and January of 1980? Willie and I rotated our parenting 180 degrees. We stopped being psychological parents and we started being the type of parents that our parents had been, with modification. We did several things:

1. We shifted the center of attention in our family away from the children to the marriage.
2. Our children came home from school one day and two children, who could have been described as unwilling to lift a finger around the house the day before, were told that from that day forward they would do all of the housework. No transition – this week we'll do one chore and next week we'll do two. No. You'll do all of them. There's the calendar on the refrigerator, there's the notebook of job descriptions over there. The work starts today, right now, get to work. That's how you talk to kids. Any questions, we'll be in the living room. We went in the living room and the kids came in a few minutes later and asked what they would be paid. I looked at Eric and said, "We're going to let you live here." Actually there were four things not on the list: cooking meals, ironing clothes, washing clothes, and mowing the grass. As the kids got old enough to do these things, they did them too. When they were 15 they made one evening meal a week and the rule was, they couldn't open a can. Mom and Dad can open cans because we have learned to cook. You need to learn to cook. When they went off to college, Willie and I didn't know what to do.
3. The kids came home from school one day and there was no TV in the house. We had given the family TV away to the Salvation Army. We didn't have a TV in our house for 4 years. Then we went out and bought the smallest color TV we could buy and hooked it up to a VCR and completely controlled the content and when we watched TV. I think my life is better for it. I've never seen a *Seinfeld* or *Home Improvement*. I was talking to my son-in-law, who loves television, and I said to him, "You watch what shows? How many hours a night do you watch these shows?" He said an hour and a half. That's about ten and a half hours a week. My son-in-law is very money oriented. I said, "Marshall, do you know how much money you could make in ten and a half hours a week?" I just think that television is a total waste of time, but that's getting off on another soapbox entirely. One year later, this child is functioning perfectly well in school.

We were in a camping store in the summer of 1978 and Eric brings me a pair of hiking boots and wants me to buy them for him. I tell him I can't afford them. He takes two steps back, slams the hiking boots down on the floor of the store which is crowded with about 25 people in it, screaming at the top of his lungs that I never buy him anything he wants. This is a 9-year-old perpetual toddler. A woman at another talk in North Carolina came up to me after the talk and told me she was relieved to hear that this child was okay today. She was in the store when that happened. She was working in the store and she came up and said that it was unbelievable. Her co-workers talked about nothing else for a week. None of them had ever seen a child like that before. The reason I tell stories like this is because I tell parents that this stuff doesn't take psychology books. It doesn't require going into therapy. It just requires an understanding that although these people, these pre-modern parents, weren't perfect parents, they were human. They had a better idea of what they were doing. What we need to do is to re-embrace the idea. The idea is more important, the mission, the attitude is more important than any practice. Re-embrace all of that, bring it into the modern era and polish it up a little bit and begin using it again. There are people all over the country who are doing this with great success.

Thanks a lot for coming.

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Spiritual Freedom and Moral Responsibility: A Most Glorious Counterpoint

Eduardo Cuevas

I would like to speak on the theme of this conference highlighting a different element: the development of the adult. Throughout this conference others have spoken about how the child benefits from having freedom and being responsible for it. Thus, the child has been seen as the beneficiary of such an environment where, once again, the adult is the benefactor.

I have particularly enjoyed these lectures, not only because they have helped shed new light on otherwise well-known Montessori topics, but also because there is an altogether different "tone" to them as they are a series of lectures delivered during a very important event in the history of the Montessori movement. There is also a rather spontaneous air to them, which only occurs in spoken communication. It's as if we are listening to Dr. Montessori repeat a concept several times in different ways, so as to clarify the concepts she's exposing – something one does not usually do when writing.

I have also decided to take this approach to my topic because of my personal concerns as a teacher trainer. You see, I am very concerned with what happens after the training in the "classroom," where I see such contrary things occur. The training has two main aspects to it, one being the passing on of information (which to many seems to be the bulk of our training courses), and a more subtle aspect dealing with formation. Until recently, I was anticipating that from this informative and formative combination would arise transformation. But I now consider that even though these should certainly bring about greater levels of awareness and consciousness, and usually do, transformation can only truly come about when the adult confronts the child, with all that the child implies.

Regarding the freedom that one must give the child within an environment with set limits, Dr. Montessori says the following:

"But the organization of the child's work according to the child's needs is only one side of the problem. The other side of the problem has fundamental importance and that is to leave the child to work, obeying not the laws of the teachers but the laws of his own inner life. When we say that the child's work should be allowed to develop in peace, we mean that the child should be allowed to develop freely, in liberty.

"Two reasons exist for this approach: first we have seen, the child develops himself. Secondly, because of that self-development, the child reveals to us the laws motivating his work, that is, the psychological laws of his life. So, we must develop both a science and an art to respect the liberty of the child."

I have a particular knack for looking up the root meaning of words, as I find that the etymology broadens enormously the sense of a word, to the point of revealing totally unsuspected relationships. Take, for instance, this strange combination of science and art, so apparently unrelated. If one looks up the root meanings, one discovers a most interesting tie. Science means knowledge – to know – which itself means "to separate one thing from another: to discern." While art means to fit together, as in a joint.

On the one hand, science (knowledge) requires that we separate, whereas art puts back together again. Thus Dr. Montessori's mention of both aspects as requirements of the adult's preparation.

She further expands this counterpoint in the following thoughts which serve as the basis for our training courses:

"Now, one cannot expect such organization of work from a regular teacher. She will not organize the work because such organization itself is a long work and a superior kind of work.

"Such a superior kind of work cannot be done right on the spot, but should have been done beforehand. A scientific preparation should precede, beyond what this teacher herself can do.

"The didactic materials, for instance, established through experimentation, established by experience, is given complete to the teacher. Of course, the teacher must be conscious of the organization of the work and must know it.

"But, beyond the teacher knowing the organization of the work, above all the teacher must respect the liberty of the child. This is the teacher's real mission."

Anyone who's taken the training recalls this aspect of their preparation, as it took the greatest amount of one's time to incorporate. The theory notes, the albums and, to a great extent, even the supervised practice, seem to concentrate on the informative nature of the training. But a formative process needs to be taking place at the same time if we are to do what Dr. Montessori prescribed. Someone once mentioned that there seem to be many good Montessori schools, but apparently no "real" Montessori schools according to her further expressions.

"A great distance and difference exist between applying this principle and making a theory out of it.

"We must tear out our hearts, cleanse them of prejudices and begin again so that the theory and the practice are one and the same. But there must be faith that the theory is really true in order to apply it, to put it into practice.

"We must believe that all beings develop by themselves, of themselves and that we cannot do better than not to interrupt that development."

Thus the observation exercises practiced during our training, since it is not until we discover for ourselves the secrets revealed by the children in the prepared environment that Montessori becomes real to us. Only then can we believe. And only then will the information concerning the approach and the materials take on a wholly different dimension.

"The preparation of the teacher is twofold: to be sensitive to the mystery

and to be sensitive to the wonder of life revealing itself.

"This is a sensitiveness which the habit of seeing miracles often makes us lose so we no longer feel the mystery.

"Thus, it is necessary to cultivate this sensibility to wonder in order to attain more perfect observation."

This new dimension is one that inspires awe before the miracle of life unfolding, a stance all too forgotten by most adults. I have often questioned if this is a characteristic of human development. Whether to develop necessarily implies losing one's sense of marvel and fascination towards life in general, and the human miracle in particular. Yet, Dr. Montessori continues to establish, as with the sensitive period for the refinement of the senses, that the adult need only to refine this sensitivity toward the miraculous.

"The sensibility is natural, but the inner refinement is necessary or else one passes by roughly and says... I did it.

"The roughness and crudeness, the inferiority of this is something from which we must lift ourselves in order to understand the life which is unseen within.

"We need education to lift us up out of this passive force which gives us this low confusion of things."

We then expect that the right kind of training should rekindle this sensitivity in our adult trainees, the emphasis being on developing the right attitude before the developing child so that we may then approach the revelation of its inner life in a wholesome manner. And what would constitute a wholesome approach to the child? Would it not be one that allows us to maintain the proper perspective as to what is occurring on its own and what our role is in this unfolding? Dr. Montessori expressed it this way:

"Our closeness to something prompts us to say that we caused something to grow when it has grown of itself.

"To recognize and realize that this thing grows of itself naturally and that this other thing is made by us is a sign of the great art of the intelligence.

"This distinction itself is fundamental and forms a grade of order in the mind of the teacher, namely, the possibility of recognizing natural phenomena and the teacher's duty toward such natural phenomena.

"This is the attitude and formation of mind which the teacher, father, mother and all humans should have."

When, in our training, we talk about the preparation of the adult, we say that this individual needs to embody certain characteristics, referred to as virtues of a moral dimension by Dr. Montessori. It is said that among these, one must develop humility, which I sincerely believe is not fully understood, as it is seen as something to impose from without, based on an act of the will, rather than an element resulting from an inner encounter with truth.

"If, for example, we have come to the conclusion that we have had little to do for the life which grows for itself, if we become convinced of this and realize it profoundly, we do not need to say, therefore, that we must become humble. We need to say only that we understand things more clearly and then we are more intelligent than before.

"That humility is the beginning of work, of accomplishing something, has always been the fundamental principle of the spiritual life. This humility, however, is not humiliation, but it is an elevation and the basic principle of producing anything."

So, it is this encounter with truth, the truth found in the reality embodied in the natural laws that govern the development of the child, which profoundly transforms the adult.

"Something similar must come about in the transformation of the teacher.

"We must pass from the type of teacher who talks from a height to a type who is apparently humble, and who works bringing about real benefit.

"This teacher must prepare not only with a culture which is easily acquired but with attitudes of character, called virtues, which he may acquire little by little in the exercise of his work.

"The point is that the teacher must not learn a new method but must acquire new attitudes. The more the teacher has been able to lose or forget her old position the more able she will be to become a good teacher in this method."

Besides this "spontaneous" humility brought about by the encounter with truth and reality, Dr. Montessori refers to other virtues which will also arise naturally when confronted with the miracle of life. What I would like to stress here is this spontaneous response on behalf of the adult, rather than the painstaking, self-sacrificial process which we've usually understood the process to be. I contend that this would imply the true transformation we're seeking, and the greatest benefit – not only to the child but in an even greater extent to the adult.

"Another thing which the teacher must learn is to contain, to hold back the impulse to intervene, to counsel or to advise.

"Teaching is a work of inhibition; a work of the will which is difficult to follow. The greatest height of the ability of the teacher will be attained when she has reached that point where the children can work entirely alone, without her help in any way.

"The teacher must learn the hard task of being patient and how to observe, because the teacher must observe always.

"Without acquiring patience one cannot acquire the ability to observe, and on the other hand, if one does not know how to observe, it is very hard to acquire patience – these two things develop together and give to those persons who have developed these virtues an entirely different characteristic from other teachers."

With regard to the fine art of observation, the cornerstone of our educational approach, Dr. Montessori adds:

"To learn to see, to observe, does not mean simply to look. It is to add to the seeing of things which all do not see, to acquire and attain an attitude of observing.

"Many ask, who is it who explains and tells us what we must look at? If I told you, then it would not be an observation, it would be a lesson. To observe means to be there, it means to be making an effort to see, not to just see those things which one can see easily, but to see the special phenomena which will develop in the children.

"If the person gave explanations, the children would be disturbed and so the only advice which we give to the teacher for observation is to be immovable and silent, a thing which is very difficult. When this has been learned,

already a great step has been made in preparation."

But what will move us to observe in such a manner? Initially it must be based on our interest in the fascinating phenomenon of development before our eyes. (This must go beyond curiosity which is superficial and lacks any power of persistence.) At the same time, when one looks at the root of the word interest (i.e., inter-esse), one can situate oneself properly for this prolonged state of immobility and noninterference. The word means to stay between two points, in this case the observed and the observer, allowing the first to express itself naturally and the latter to witness these expressions...and be touched by them. This, according to Dr. Montessori, creates within the observer the same passion for life as found in the observed, namely the child.

"When this same passion is born within the teacher, she will be in the same category with the modern experimental scientist. The teacher may have this scientific method in her hands for a long time. She might coldly try to apply it to the children in her class, without knowing precisely and surely whether she is really acting in the right way.

"But, if she comes to the point where she sees some phenomena in the child which interests her deeply and passionately, she then has the mathematical proof that she has entered on the right path.

"Little by little the teacher will see psychic phenomena in the child's actions and will learn to interpret these experiences, these revelations from the child. When she feels this fascination and this thing which is more than happiness, she may be sure that she has provided the child with the right environment."

It is this encounter with the truth and reality found in the developing child that transforms the adult. It is this which impacts her life and changes her from within, not merely from without. It is then that true spiritual freedom is experienced, and with it the moral, "virtuous" responsibility which inevitably accompanies it. As Dr. Montessori put it:

"When the teacher reaches this point of maturity, all the rest will come of itself. When the teacher develops the method of the modern scientist, patience and constancy no longer exist in that form, but have been transformed into passion, a passion making her joyously observe the phenomenon before her eyes. Such teachers no longer need to learn to be silent and motionless.

"Our own interest in watching the development of this phenomenon in the child makes it natural for us to stand silent.

"The birth of this passion... is a central point or fulcrum upon which to build the personality of the teacher.

"We might call this positive direction and it permeates the development of the teacher, the scientist and the child."

In the beginning of this presentation, I mentioned that we would be looking at the topic of this conference with respect to the adult development and not so much the child's. That is because I have come to discover that even we, as Montessorians, still believe, however subtly, that the child is the one who benefits because of his contact with us. Somehow, probably because any change has occurred basically from without and not from within, our paradigm has not truly changed, still viewing ourselves as the "giver" in this relationship. We do not seem to understand that the child is as much a giver – if not more so – as we are. That we, as individuals and as humanity, mutually benefit from children, in whatever plane of development they may be. We will have had a profound transformation in the adult psyche when we are able to recognize that the newborn, the infant, the child and the adolescent all contribute to humanity in the plane they are in, and not once they've matured into the adult of the species.

"Then it is that we who have been observing and following this natural development of the child who feel moved as we would feel moved by any great miracle of nature."

The Montessori educator must be able to see the developing human being as himself, or himself as the developing human being, eliminating any sense of superiority in the understanding that he himself is as yet incomplete in his unfolding, and that his encounter with other souls in the path of life is of mutual enrichment, where the notions of giver and a receiver makes little sense.

"We might say that in our method we see life developing and, at the same time, the love for this developing life itself develops.

"In teaching the student, (the) teacher really sees himself brought back in the phenomena which he is observing, in the life he is studying. Teachers really develop a personal interest seeing human life at its source, at its beginning.

"A wonderful feeling and another love is born in the teacher and there enters within the teacher and the scientist an Apostolic spirit. This Apostolic spirit sees not only the spirit of study about the child but the child object becomes a teacher full of lessons to teach us, his teachers.

"It is, as Christ said, 'He who wishes to be first in the Kingdom of Heaven must become like a little child.'"

The training of a Montessori educator is therefore a subtle thing, as subtle as the balance between a science and an art, and just as exciting! It is the adult that stands to gain the most due to his contact with the unfettered source of humanity's development. It is the adult who will be brought back to the very essence of his existence, of his reason for being, when coming in close contact with those that vibrate so enthusiastically before the miracle of life, as if they were conscious of it. Is this not what it means to be the mature individual of the species: that one be fully conscious of the marvel that surrounds one?

I would like to end my presentation with yet some more quotes from Dr. Montessori, as they should be our initial source of inspiration and direction, the child being at the core of it.

"The study of a teacher is like a study of the Soul. The teacher sees what is to be found there and also sees the path the teacher herself must follow to learn.

"This feeling of love is a connection between Souls. The Soul of the child begins to blend with the Soul of the teacher and the child becomes obedient. When the spiritual life has formed, it remains and grows and perfects itself because it is like a living being which has been generated and must therefore grow.

"In this environment, one feels that the creation of love is a great work of sacrifice, of education, of patience and one cannot bring about this creation with vain words. Certainly, the teacher does not teach love and morality, but she has the great consolation in seeing it born."

May you be deeply touched by what she discovered, and "stop looking at the pointing finger, but rather look at what the finger is pointing to: the child." Thank you for sharing this time of reflection with me. ■

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Practical Applications of Freedom and Responsibility in the Elementary Years

Phyllis Pottish-Lewis

Freedom and responsibility: the practical means by which a teacher can strike an effective balance between these two key Montessori concepts to create a healthy atmosphere of personal evolution for children, rather than a climate of permissiveness, and a consideration of factors that can impede the child's attempts to be independent and responsible.

Introduction

License versus Freedom

The child is born with potentials. These potentials have been called by Dr. Montessori the "human potentials." He has the potential for developing the functional intellect, eventually being able to use reason and judgement; he has the potential for coordinated movement; he has the potential for the development of language; he has the potential for the ability to function independently as a human being, embodying all that that implies. These are the potentials that the child at birth possesses, and which then need to be actuated. In order to actualize the potentials, the child needs to be able to act freely on his environment.

As Dr. Maria Montessori reasoned out the child's revelations to her, she concluded that in order for children to develop any human potential, they must be given the freedom to act. It is through his own activity that the child can develop himself. The child must be free to move; he must be free to talk; he must be free to pursue his own interests and curiosities as they emerge. She says, "Let us leave the life free to develop within the limits of the good, and let us observe this inner life developing. This is the whole of our mission."[1]

This idea of freedom is, however, a hard concept for many people to understand. Those who have attempted it without firmly grasping all of the concepts inherent within it have promoted a *climate of permissiveness* which is seen in both homes and schools today. But it was never Dr. Montessori's intent to offer children freedom without the limits or checks that would provide a balance for that freedom. She believed that all freedoms given, must also be attended by responsibilities. In fact, by asking the child to be responsible to the freedoms given, he is provided an opportunity to develop his ability to be responsible. In our quest to assist the child in his path to independence, we also provide the opportunity to become responsible as it is intrinsic to independence.

To ask for responsibility for the freedom given is not an unreasonable thing to do, but in fact, a necessity. The philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre says, "...if [responsibility] is simply the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom."[2] If that requirement is not there, then the freedom will become license, and chaos and confusion will ensue.

We have, then, Dr. Montessori asking us not to impart or impose an educational method on the child impassively, but actually to aid life in its construction by offering him freedom and then leaving him free to act. However, the freedom granted must be tempered with responsibility. Herein lies the crux of the challenge that we, as Montessori teachers, face. To really offer the education that Dr. Montessori envisioned for the child, we must offer freedom balanced by responsibility. This requires artistry. Without balance between these two essential elements, we are in danger of creating a climate of permissiveness or a climate of restriction, both of which will obstruct the child in his natural development. As a part of executing this fundamental task of the Montessori educator, the teacher must first recognize and define for herself every aspect critical for success in this great endeavor.

Freedom to Choose One's Own Work

Hence, let's identify and define for ourselves exactly the freedoms that must be offered in the elementary prepared environment and their correspondent responsibilities. The children should have the freedom to explore and study any topics that pique their imaginations without interference in this regard. They should be free to choose the work that appeals to them. These explorations should happen both inside and outside of the class. The limit associated with this particular freedom would be that the children meet requirements asked of them were they to attend a traditional school. Another limit is that their work must be constructive and productive. To arrive at the desired balance between this freedom and its limit, the children must understand clearly all of the expectations associated with their choice and the fundamental value of work.

Importance of Work

Children are given the freedom to choose their work, but they in fact must work. At this time in their lives, which is a period of great work and accomplishment, their time is too valuable to waste. Therefore, the prevailing expectation for all children is that productive work must be done. For a teacher to ask this of a child without qualms or doubt, she herself must appreciate the vital role of work, so that she can expect it from her children.

Truly realizing, as Dr. Montessori has said, that work is the basis of civilization, and that being able to work is essential to the development of the child, helps to fortify the teacher when she is faced with difficulties that arise with children and parents in connection with the expectations of work. Another notion that underscores her fortification is fully comprehending that the elementary child is truly capable of great work. She always must have faith in the child and his enormous ability and never waiver in that belief in order to ask him to work a little harder to attain his potential and to develop his work ethic.

Until a teacher gains her own experience, these notions are sometimes difficult to defend in the face of paren-

tal adversity. In today's social climate of permissiveness, a less experienced teacher might doubt herself and her requests, wondering if she, in fact, is asking too much work of the children. But by succumbing to pressures of any kind, parental, societal or otherwise, and expecting less of the children than that which they are capable of doing, unwittingly teachers demean the child's abilities. If one does not expect the child to work, one is a hindrance to his natural development rather than a help. Margaret Stephenson says, "If we compromise this idea, we compromise the child's chances." Appreciating the importance of work sustains the teacher when she asks the child to be responsible for his choices. Thus, she should have no compunctions about expecting that the child's work is constant, productive, constructive, and even at times ambitious.

Spontaneous Work of Children When it is Their Choice

Another observation Dr. Montessori had regarding the child's work is found in *Education For A New World*. She writes, "The real aim of all children was revealed as constancy in work and spontaneity in choice of work, without guidance of teachers. Following some inner guide, they occupied themselves in work different for each that gave them joy and peace, and then something else appeared that had never before been known among children, a spontaneous discipline. This struck visitors even more than the explosion into writing had done; children were walking about, seeking for work in freedom, each concentrating on a different task, yet the whole group presented the appearance of perfect discipline. So the problem was solved: to obtain discipline, give freedom."

Our injunction has been given us – to obtain discipline from the children, give freedom. Spontaneous discipline can easily be detected in those environments where the teacher is able to offer freedom balanced by responsibility. It really is no mystery. In a healthy work climate, when the children are left free to choose projects of their own interest, they work spontaneously. Consequently they are responsible to their choices of work. Children *working spontaneously on their freely chosen* activities without the presence of the teacher are testimony to her artistry to offer freedom balanced by responsibility. It is at these times that she can leave the class and no change in their behavior occurs. This phenomenon is easily detected when it is working. Its antithesis is also easily observed. If work is imposed on the children or assigned by the teacher, there will be a disintegration of work and subsequent disorder will ensue when she leaves the room. A teacher only needs to observe objectively her own class to see what it is that she offers, liberty or license?

Children Who Don't Work

It is unrealistic to believe that all children will come into the class with an acceptable work ethic, ready to assume the responsibility for their free work choices. Some lack the ability to choose constructive activities and attend to them properly. Those with this deficiency must be helped in that process. Help is offered when a child is consistently expected to work, and when a variety of exciting lessons from the colorful palette of Cosmic Education has been given him from which he can make a personal choice. This giving of lessons is a basic step. To arouse the desire to work, give many interesting, varied lessons. Then ask the child to choose from a few of them to pursue an idea more deeply. If the child can't or won't choose for himself, choose for him until he can do it by himself. This doesn't mean give assignments to the whole class. Only after discussion with the child who needs it, give him an assignment, one that must be accomplished. Only give one thing to do at a time, not a long list of things. Once he accomplishes this one thing, give him a chance to choose the next. If he can't choose, choose for him again, and do so until he can; if he can make a choice, leave him free to do so, but he must do so, and he must work to completion. Gradually with a child like this you can help him develop the same work ethic that others exhibit in your class.

These children require much of the teacher's attention and energy, but it is wise to make the exertion early in the year in order to help them to choose independently and responsibly. By engaging in this course, you have asked the child to meet a standard of work worthy of his ability, at the same time connecting him with the environment, so ultimately he, too, can work spontaneously. It is then that you recede into the background. Children who succeed at this process, eventually working without continual guidance from the teacher, recognize their success, and consequently feel good about themselves. This is truly how self-esteem is developed, not by giving children empty compliments. Children, who work spontaneously and independently, recognize it as such, and gain confidence in their abilities and develop a certain expertise. These acquisitions in their turn, further motivate the children to engage in more work.

Freedom to Work in Groups

Children naturally gravitate to each other at this age. Dr. Montessori has said that this child, as an individual, should participate in a truly social life. This is why children should be free to work in groups. Group work gives the individual the possibility for growth and improvement, and makes the formation of society possible. The children work best when given the freedom to work together according to their natural proclivities, and through this kind of approach over time they consciously learn the difficult skills required for successfully working with others. This accomplishment is not always easy.

For the child newly entering the elementary class from the primary, where most of the work was done individually, the concept of group work and its attendant responsibilities must be taught. Consequently all of the lessons given to the elementary children should be group lessons. Many of the early elementary presentations lend themselves naturally to exposing the children to the factors necessary for working with others, examples of which are the creation of the noun booklet and the needs of the plant experiment. From these activities the children realize that working in groups is the expectation, and is, in fact, legitimate. They also become aware of, sometimes painfully, the components required for working in groups. Give and take are required. Compromise is a factor. Working with others requires that at some point one must relinquish his personal preferences for the good

of the working group. Shared responsibility for the project is another essential element. Cooperation and collaboration, both characteristics for the successful accomplishment of an undertaking, must be developed and refined over time. These two traits just don't miraculously appear when the child reaches a certain age. The child has the opportunity to develop these valuable qualities when there is freedom in the class to work with others.

To provide effectively an environment that offers "group work" in its truest form, a teacher must understand herself exactly what group work is and what it is not. Group work is not three children sitting at the same table, each with his own bead frame, or some other piece of material, doing parallel work. It is not a line activity, nor is it being in the same lesson with each person doing his own follow-up activity. Group work is where children are working on one and the same piece of material, for example the checker board, a grammar box, a timeline, a science experiment, each of whom is taking turns, sharing both the work and the responsibility for its completion. Group work is when, in order to accomplish something, cooperation, collaboration and communication with others must be employed. Decisions have to be made, and made by the group. This is noisy work, which is why your class will be abuzz if you offer this freedom scrupulously.

Some people don't work well together. For this reason the children must have the freedom to choose with whom to work. If we allow them to make their own groupings, they can make a society in which they can function favorably, exercising helpful and respectful behavior, attendant with responsibility and reliability.

Freedom to Talk

Intrinsic to the freedom of working with others is the freedom to talk. Without the freedom to talk children could accomplish nothing. If this freedom is withheld from children, not only will the qualities generated by group work be impeded, but the child's ability to discuss, debate, argue his point of view, defend his position, crystallize his thoughts, and articulate his ideas would be seriously stifled. Throughout the elementary class where these freedoms are granted, a hum of conversation should be the norm. When children are planning, creating, deciding, debating, they are rarely quiet about it. By working together children learn to communicate effectively, to express their personal ideas, ones which take form and shape during the whole process.

Related Responsibility to These Freedoms

Again, by being offered these two freedoms, the child can reap bounteous results that only come from practice. However, the corresponding responsibility to these two freedoms is that the group work and conversation, in fact, are substantial, meaningful and worthwhile. The teacher is the final arbiter and must decide if the activity and conversation is, indeed, constructive and developmental. If, in her estimation, productivity falls short, or the conversation is merely gratuitous noise, then these occupations must be interrupted, sooner or later. The freedom to work and talk together does not mean that chaos can reign and time can be wasted.

For the teacher to act deliberately sometimes requires courage. Again, let's take our lead and guidance from Dr. Montessori's actual words when we are faced with having to interfere with children's work and behavior.

She says, in no uncertain terms, in *The Montessori Method*, "When the teachers were weary of my observations, they began to allow the children to do whatever they pleased. I saw children with their feet on the tables, or with their fingers in their noses, and no intervention was made to correct them. I saw others push their companions, and I saw dawn in the faces of these an expression of violence; and not the slightest attention on the part of the teacher. Then I had to intervene to show with what absolute rigour it is necessary to hinder, and little by little suppress, all those things which we must not do, so that the child may come to discern clearly between good and evil.

"If discipline is to be lasting, its foundations must be laid in this way and these first days are the most difficult for the directress."[3]

And she also says in *Education For A New World*, "Children who persist in molesting others must be stopped, as such activity is not of the nature that needs completion of its cycle."[4]

The significance in her message is not ambiguous. It could not be more straightforward and clear. For their own sakes children with inappropriate behavior must have it checked. And this task lies with the teacher. This is her responsibility. In most cases it is usually unsuitable behavior that impedes the constructive work of children, and it must be curtailed immediately with "absolute rigor." Children should not be free to behave unfavorably. When this is the case, license has been granted.

Discipline

Another benefit of providing an environment with a balance between freedom and responsibility resulting in the child's spontaneous activity, is that a child, engaged in his own real work, seldom has the inclination to test the limits, as he is interested and satisfied with his work and his endeavors. This is the "spontaneous discipline" at work of which Dr. Montessori speaks.

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines "discipline" as: "the training expected to produce a specific type or pattern of behavior, especially training that produces moral or mental improvement." The teacher has done her part to ensure the success of this kind of training in her environment when in the first days of school with the help of the children, she clearly defines the freedoms offered, and the limits and responsibilities associated with each. The limits give the child guidance in regard to his actions and behavior. And, because these limits ought never to change, because they are not capricious and wavering, because they are applied to each member of the class without prejudice, they provide the child with a sense of security and stability. The order, limits and discipline established in the class for harmonious relationships become a standard by which the child can gauge his own behavior. He can determine what is "right and wrong" according to the measure of the class.

As this can be a lengthier process of development for some children, there will be times when they fail at their attempts to act and behave fittingly. During these occasions, for the

sake of the child and for the sake of the class as a whole, the teacher must not fail to act. She partially has done her part by initially establishing, with assistance from the children, the laws and order governing the small society of the classroom. Together they have created a structure for acceptable conduct. But ultimately, and to complete her responsibility, the teacher must administer the mutually and fairly established structure.

Administering the Structure

In regards to success in this endeavor, let me offer the following advice. The first piece is to always, always be consistent in administering the structure. Remember that the clearly established laws and order of the class are the foundation of the class's society. You can change the structure of that foundation when you are inconsistent in administering it. By being inconsistent you invite the children to test the structure to determine the new limits for the day.

However, when you are consistent, the child knows without a doubt what to expect when he does commit an infraction. "This happened, we agreed it wouldn't for these reasons, and since it did, this will follow." Hence, whatever consequences are imposed can be done so matter of factly, without anger, debate or rancor. Once the child experiences the consequences of his actions, he is given another opportunity to succeed. Implementing the structure and limits becomes a simple matter of fact. There should be no surprises and need not be any reprehension. Through the teacher's persistent consistency and follow-through, the children develop a confidence and security in how to operate within the class. However, when the structure is administered whimsically, capriciously, or erratically, it creates uncertainty within the children. They cannot rely on an unstable set of acceptable expectations. Not only does inconsistency invite testing of the structure, it also undermines your efforts to establish an environment where children are free to function independently and harmoniously.

Another piece of advice is always to administer the structure firmly, but fairly, and without anger. This is possible because the expectations were clearly delineated by and for the children early on. There is nothing new, there are no surprises. Try to do it with humor if you possibly can muster it. Perhaps you can develop the ability to frown with a twinkle in your eye. But make sure that when doing this the children realize you mean what you say. They must take you seriously, thereby taking the expectations seriously, in effect, seriously recognizing their responsibility to the freedoms offered them.

After the child has fulfilled his consequences, give him reassuring smiles and pats and encourage future success, so that he won't think that the mishap has marked him as "bad." Everyone makes mistakes. Let him know that you are working on his behalf, and that both you and the structure are there to help him see the importance of functioning harmoniously and successfully within society. Remind him that you are committed to working indefatigably so that he will achieve success ultimately. An implication within this remark, besides the obvious communication for the child, will be that the expectations today will be the same as those of tomorrow. You are telling the child, "I am devoted to your success and so will never waiver."

Never, never fail to administer the structure because you are too tired or discouraged. This is especially critical if the child knows that you know for sure he has committed an infraction. Ignoring recognized breaches, no matter how small, constitutes tacit condonement. This gives the child permission to behave according to his whims. This can be a destructive message for the child. Also, it will serve to undermine all of the hard work that you already have invested in securing a balance between freedom and responsibility in your class. Never ignore an infraction. You must somehow marshal the energy required to follow-through with maintaining the standard for behavior. You can never throw up your hands and say, "They just won't listen." Yes, they will listen, if they know that you are serious. If you are half-hearted and unconvincing, then this too will be conveyed to them, and again they will act accordingly. You choose. It is up to you. A small example would be if the children were asked not to run in the class. At the first instance that they run, they must be reminded of the request and the reason for not running. Depending on the child, perhaps he should be asked to go back and walk to reinforce and remind him concretely of the expectation, and so he realizes that ignoring the expectation will not be tolerated. If the children are repeat offenders or recidivists, then something more must be done, otherwise the structure and expectations mean nothing. They must come to understand that they are not at liberty to run. You must deal with each and every situation without fail and take it to the degree that is required. No inappropriate action is too small to be ignored.

A teacher does not have to be afraid to use the word "No." Sometimes when a point is expressed in the negative it is better taken by those children who need to hear something more forcefully. Elementary children are resilient. You can't break them or their spirits by telling them not to do something. John Rosemond, family psychologist in North Carolina, says, "Inflicting temporary pain to a child's feelings and destroying the child psychologically are horses of two entirely different colors. In fact, a fully operational social conscience cannot develop without causing a child occasionally psychic pain, as in, shame, embarrassment, and remorse."

To forgive continually the infractions that a child commits does him a disservice rather than a service. The message conveyed in this regard is that he is above the law, and that the expectations set for others do not apply to him. Therefore he can behave however he wishes without thought, consideration, or responsibility to others. However, when you make the effort to follow-through consistently without fail with the administering of the structure in a fair and just way, the implicit message for the child is that the law and order established in the class is important for each member of the class, and as a member each person must be responsible to what society asks of him, even me. I must adapt my conduct to the reasonable and protective laws of the group. As Dr. Montessori has said, if discipline is to be lasting, its foundations must be laid in this way, and these first days are the most difficult for the directress.

Teacher's Responsibility

Lesson Giving

To aid the child in his journey to construct a responsible member of society is the goal of the elementary Montessori teacher. To do this she needs to create an environment in which a balance between freedom and responsibility exists. This is a daunting task, but it is possible. Again, a first step in effecting this goal is to analyze the components required for success, and then implementing each of them consciously. One such component of the prepared environment is the prepared teacher. Earlier I mentioned that in order to help that child having difficulty finding work to sustain his interest, and thus fulfilling his responsibility, the teacher must work to link the child to his environment. In this regard, besides the suggestions I have to propose, Dr. Montessori has some definite advice to offer on the subject. In *Education For a New World* she writes, "The teacher needs to be seductive, and can use any device – except of course the stick – to win the children's attention. She can do what she likes more or less, because as yet she upsets by her intervention nothing very important, so a bright manner in suggesting activities is the chief necessity."[9]

By saying the teacher needs to be seductive, obviously Dr. Montessori is suggesting that as teachers, when necessary, we must learn to entice children into work. If we were to embellish on her ideas of a "bright manner," given the nature of the elementary child, it seems that it would be useful to be enthusiastic, and have a sense of humor used judiciously with these children. Earlier I have said to entice that child, who as yet is reluctant to work, one must give many and varied lessons. In order to "suggest the activities," as she puts it, you must be completely familiar with the contents of your albums. Your albums are the tools of your trade, and you must know them thoroughly, so you will be prepared to act when you see the child express some interest in some area.

This familiarity only comes from constant work on the part of the teacher. She must read and reread her albums, and by so doing, possibly remembers lessons long forgotten, or reviews the accuracy of some presentation. To facilitate this enterprise it is useful to make detailed outlines of the contents of each of the albums, and in the case of certain major presentations, it is profitable to outline the steps of the lesson. The point of this undertaking is to be able to find quickly the required knowledge for those activities not yet committed to memory.

Once you are prepared by knowing completely your albums, then you must give the lessons. Your classroom will be very exciting if you have a myriad of activities going on at any one time. This can only be generated by your giving lots and lots of lessons. There are times when the intensity of lesson giving is greater and most productive. During the mornings in the fall with a full complement of children, you should keep on the move consistently. It would not be uncommon on Monday mornings to give enough group lessons so that each child in the class would receive one. Lessons should be given throughout the whole day, not just in the mornings. After vacations is another time of intense lesson giving. And of course, throughout the year lessons are given very regularly. It would behoove a teacher to constantly monitor for herself the number and variety of lessons she gives. Giving lessons is the secret to evoking from your children, all of them, an interest that will in turn lead them to exhibit the characteristics of the "spontaneous discipline" of which Dr. Montessori speaks. It is then that they will really be responsible to the freedom to choose their work.

How to Give

Another matter of consideration is how to give these group lessons to the elementary child. As we take to heart Dr. Montessori's words to have a "bright manner" in suggesting activities, we must be enthusiastic in our approach. No matter how many times before we have made the same presentation to a myriad of children long grown, we must remember that this is the first time this eager, young, impressionistic mind will encounter this new idea. We must do it justice.

Of course you want to appeal to the particular sensitivities of the age, the reason and the imagination, and so when presenting any concept you must tell your stories using imagery and allegory. If you fail to appeal to the child, you will fail to excite him to work. Therefore, take great care that your lessons are not pedantic and boring, but instead interesting and imaginative, although they are factual.

The lessons, to be effective, must be clearly presented. Do not obscure the intended point by talking too much and too long. It is tedious for the children and you will lose their attention, and consequently their interest, thus undermining your attempts to stimulate work. Always engage the children in the activities so that they are active participants of the lesson. To do otherwise would be to talk at them, and this never arouses their interest, only their ennui. We want them to assume responsibility for carrying on the work once we leave the lesson, so we have to employ them at the outset, so they claim the work for their own.

Another hint at permitting the children to embrace the work as theirs is by limiting the amount of information you impart to them in any given lesson. A teacher only needs to give the critical points of the concept that will create understanding for the child. Beyond that she should limit her information, because then she creates opportunities for the child to further seek interesting information independently. If we were to give all of the facts, rather than leaving the children wondering about some unknown, then the children would have nothing else to do. The work would be done, and not by him, but by us. Then we would be back at square one trying to connect the child with a piece of work. Effectively what we have managed to do unwittingly is to scuttle our own attempts to motivate the child. By imparting all of the information we have in a lesson, leaving nothing unanswered and possibly intriguing to the child, we become our own greatest impediment.

What to Give

The lessons that are given throughout the day must come from all of the subjects presented in the training courses, the whole of Cosmic Education. Children's choices should not be limited by what we choose to present or not present. As one regards her class at random moments there should be a

complete array of activities observable. Children should be working in the areas of biology, geography, history, mathematics, language, art, and music. One must observe her class, analyzing it to see if there is a balance in the activities in view. A teacher must make sure that there is as much geography, history and biology being given in the morning as are math and language. Never should you create an environment where only mathematics and language are permitted in the morning, with other subjects relegated to afternoons. Or, never should you assign a certain subject for a certain day of the week. And, never, never should you be tempted to limit the child by limiting his exposure to what you feel is proper and fitting through fixed curricula, such as spelling, reading, or math programs and workbooks. If you succumb to these strategies, because you want to ensure that the children systematically gain expertise in these "important" subjects, then you yourself, have become the greatest impediment to the child's freedom to choose his own work. In doing so, you also impede his critical development of independence and responsibility. You have become the obstacle to the birth of spontaneity in the child by choosing what you think is important, rather than allowing him to choose that which appeals to his particular needs.

When there is a variety of activity taking place within your class at all times, it will be dynamic and exciting. Children naturally will want to be there. When a class is exciting and unpredictable, it cannot be boring and tiresome for them, especially when they are free to pursue occupations of their own choosing.

Also remember that children learn from each other. From the immediate ambiance they seem to assimilate knowledge and information with facility. With vibrant and pertinent conversations transpiring, interesting facts and figures take flight throughout the class with the greatest of ease. Children can't help but share with others things that excite them. Thus, they talk about their discoveries and their work. When a greater variety of work is happening, the children will have greater exposure to many different subjects and ideas. This exposure to variety also can suggest possibilities of work to children of little interest and as yet unemployed.

Teacher's Record Keeping System

A component in the success of a teacher to link the child to the environment efficiently and masterfully is her ability to determine exactly what lessons in all areas her individual children need and when. She must be well versed in their abilities, their interests, their weaknesses, their voids, and their progress. To be responsible to 30 to 35 children, an optimal number for an elementary class, a teacher must be particularly mindful of all these aspects for each child, and have for each a plan for development. This suggests that she must have an efficient and workable system for tracking each child carefully. This is her responsibility, and one that will augment her abilities to offer the child the requisite freedoms. If she knows her plans for each child, then she can free him up to investigate topics that appeal to him, while keeping in her mind those other elements for which the child has a responsibility – basic skills and requirements. The teacher can allow the child to work at his leisure and pleasure on the work of his choice, but at the same time help guide him towards those necessary acquisitions.

The system a teacher uses for tracking her children should be easily usable and sufficiently simple, rather than complicated and overwhelming in order to guarantee use. Also, it should not be excessively time consuming. Otherwise she may fail to use it regularly, losing her guide in granting freedom to the child. People often resort to freedom-impeding strategies to ensure that groups of children as a whole accomplish that which would be asked of them in traditional school, when they do not have an effective method for monitoring individual children. Teachers, too, are individuals, and so a method that works for one might not be effective for another. Each needs to find her own personal system that is workable, efficient, and efficacious. Then she must use her system diligently and assiduously. This requires an act of discipline on her part, and is critical to her responsibilities as an elementary Montessori teacher.

To Whom to Give

Of course you know that group lessons typically are the norm in the elementary class because of the operative characteristic of this age child to seek others with whom to work. But due consideration must be given to what kind of groups. Lessons are directed to small groups of two to six. These numbers are only fixed by their efficacy. The moment that a child within the group cannot be personally engaged in the activity and loses interest because of the numbers, then the group is too big. If you can hold the concentration and fascination of each child in a group of seven and eight, don't rule out those numbers. However, in my experience, it is indeed a rare teacher who can grip the attention of each child and hold it for the duration of the lesson with a group that large.

Lessons given to the whole class should be limited severely for the same reason. That is not to say that they never happen, they do, but they are not typical and they should not be the norm. And of course, one person does not constitute a group. So unless there is a particular reason, and there are times when this is called for, one does not present solely to an individual.

Variety in the composition of the groups should be the hallmark in the elementary class. Groups should never remain static, and never, never, should these groups be labeled for ease of calling people to a lesson. By doing this you categorize the children, and in turn evaluate themselves according to the group in which they find themselves, or in which they don't find themselves. This can be a very limiting and devastating proposition for the child. You also fix your own perceptions about children, rather than viewing them as different and evolving individuals, ones capable of daily change and progress. To do this is a serious impediment to extending freedom.

The groups should vary in age, genders, abilities and personalities. Always include those people who indicate an interest in a lesson you might be giving. Usually the interest demonstrated is very subtle and can be missed easily. It often takes the form of loitering on the periphery of the small group assembled. Be alert to these interested children and invite them to join. If the

lesson is beyond their capabilities that will soon become apparent, and they can leave gracefully. There will be no harm done. However, if the lesson is not beyond their ken and their interest is arrested, you have succeeded at your task.

By varying your groups consistently, you can orchestrate opportunities for children working with people they might not otherwise have chosen. You legitimately can separate unproductive combinations and unite unlikely partnerships. This is especially effective when introducing new children into the class. Varying the groups is also an effective means for breaking up destructive cliques. In this case, since the composition of the groups is not static or determined, but always unpredictable, there should be few complaints from the members who are unhappy with the separation. Furthermore, these members will have little ammunition to sustain their objections, since variety is merely a matter of course. Many times it is a relief to children reluctant to speak out to be put with or separated from certain parties. Also, by diversifying your groups there is an element of excitement and surprise for the children. This element helps to keep the exciting dynamic going on in your class, and this is one of the goals for which we are striving.

Other Notions that Develop Responsibility

Going Out

As one considers the elements in a Montessori environment conducive to the development of responsibility, one cannot overlook the concept of going-out that Dr. Montessori elucidated in her writings in *From Childhood to Adolescence*, and to which I referred in my earlier lecture. For a number of valuable reasons the child must be allowed to explore the outer environment and society at large. For the purposes of today's discussion we concern ourselves with how the notion of going-out fosters the development of responsibility.

To successfully effect going-out, the teacher has the responsibility to think through each and every step necessary. One such initial step of that process is the education of the parents and administration of the school. These two are the bodies that need to understand the principles of going-out, because these are the bodies that can either help or hinder the process. They are due adequate education so they can act responsibly in regards to this important matter. The responsibility of this education falls to the teacher alone, as it is she who knows the importance and relevance of going-out to the child's development.

When children go out into the environment they must be expected to manage themselves responsibly. This is a process that is developed by degrees, choice by choice, and which begins in the classroom with the guidance of the teacher. Therefore, another initial step in the process is the introduction of the notion of going-out to the children. It should be framed as one of the freedoms related to the child's work, and extended when the children exhibit the necessary responsibility that going-out demands. These responsibilities must be delineated clearly and straightforwardly to the children, so that they know the expectations involved, expectations that will serve as a goal to which they strive and aspire. Also, if ever they are denied the freedom to go-out, they will understand it is because they did not meet the expectations.

The emergence of responsible behavior from the children signals a propitious moment for the teacher to present the details of going-out. It must be introduced much like a lesson to the children, giving them first the concept of it as a reality, and then subsequently giving them concrete ideas and suggestions regarding places they can visit in relation to their personal investigations and research. The children need to see going-out as an exciting opportunity of which to avail themselves. Initially to launch the project, the teacher may need to assist more than she ordinarily would. But after she has modeled it successfully, and groups begin to go-out, others will notice. Going-out is infectious; once one group does it, another will want to as well.

Just a cautionary word to reiterate: the success of one's ability to effect going-out depends on the foresightedness and thoughtfulness of the teacher in anticipating all of the steps and exigencies that may arise in connection with this endeavor. Each school has different conditions to be considered, and so each system for going-out will be different. But it **is possible** with energetic and creative thinking to implement successfully going-out, no matter where one teaches.

Public School Curriculum

Just as the notion of going-out needs to be presented concretely to the children, so too, does the public school curriculum. The public school curriculum, a concept I mentioned in my earlier lecture, is one of the three metaphorical pieces of material that Dr. Montessori defined as limits to balance the freedoms offered the child in the elementary class. Children must be consciously aware of the limits or the responsibilities asked of them in connection with the freedom granted them to select their own work. They need to know the expectations of society, and those expectations are delineated in the body of the public school curriculum. Children also must recognize and accept that it is **their responsibility** to acquire this body of knowledge at the same time as they pursue their personal preferences.

Hence, the teacher must present the curriculum to the children just as she would present a piece of material. By doing this she makes them aware of the requirements that society asks of them and for which they are accountable. The curriculum can be presented twice a year to small groups, once in September, again in January, and then to individuals as needed. As the children peruse the curriculum they can appraise themselves of any voids they may have, and accordingly schedule time to remedy the situation.

This responsibility is not solely that of the child. Ultimately the teacher is responsible for the child's learning all that would have been asked of him traditionally. However, she does this in partnership with the child. To do this she first must provide a public school curriculum to place in the class, without which the child would have no societal guidelines to which to refer. The absence of this guide would be a serious deterrent to his efforts to meet his personal obligation and responsibility. Thus, the teacher's responsibility is twofold: she must provide a legible

and usable local curriculum, and then she must present it in an effective and befitting way to the child.

Let me caution you by advising against ever letting the public school curriculum take on a life of its own. It should never be embellished beyond what it states, otherwise the limits imposed would be that of the person embellishing rather than the limits defined by society. This in itself, imposes an unnecessary impediment to the child's freedom to follow his interests. Never present it to the children in such a way that each child has his own copy, and uses it as a checklist to tick off each accomplished item. When this is asked of the child it takes the joy out of learning, and reduces it to a mechanism that controls what the child learns.

Record Books or Journals

The child is helped to monitor his own freely-chosen work by keeping track of what he does throughout the day. All of his work and activities are recorded in what are sometimes called daily journals or record books, the second metaphorical piece of material recommended by Dr. Montessori to balance the child's freedom. The record book is a device by which the child can both monitor his own work and activities and assume responsibility for them. In these books he enters the time he begins an activity, the name of the activity, the amount of work he accomplishes, and the time that he stops the work. Each of these elements is required if this device is to be effective. To a certain extent, when done correctly the amount of work done can be quantified, giving the child a means by which he can evaluate his productivity or lack thereof.

One of the first steps in the child's use of this valuable tool is a clear and precise presentation given him. As with other elements in offering children freedom in the elementary class, this too must be thought out very carefully. Things to consider are: Does the child tell time? If not, how will he be able to record his time? Where will he find the date? What are his handwriting skills like? Does he need a book with wider lines than the other children? Does he know the name of the material he has used? Who can help him with these dilemmas? The solutions to questions of this nature must be found so that you and your children can succeed in the use of this tool. Initially this is not an easy thing to accomplish, and its mastery requires consideration, determination, and perseverance from both teacher and child.

The children should be given the reasons for keeping these journals, so they understand their importance in relation to their free use of time. These are limits to their freedom. They must see them as tools for tracing and assessing their work, as well as standards for measuring their responsibility and accountability. These books should never be used as an assignment journal in which children write what they are going to do for the day. This defeats and distorts their purpose completely. When this is asked of children, they have been pinned down to prescribed work, just as a butterfly is pinned in captivity.

For children coming from the primary class, the idea of tracking one's work is a new notion, and it initially requires constant monitoring. At the outset of the year, the record books of all the new children must be checked regularly as a sign of encouragement and reinforcement of the expectations. However, before long it will become apparent who avoids the task, thus requiring consistent support and monitoring, and who doesn't. For those who don't require constant attention you can rely on random and periodic inspection. To foster the use of the journals, the teacher can use a little seduction by encouraging the children to decorate them and by providing the time to do so. Further, if the books provided are beautiful and attractive, rather than commonplace or mundane, they call to the children to be used and valued.

Without commitment, dedication, ceaseless consistency and follow-through on the part of the teacher, the record books will not succeed. And without the use of the record books, the child is deprived of a fundamental instrument that offers him an opportunity for self-evaluation and a means to handle responsibly the free use of time granted him. For this reason the Montessori elementary teacher must be committed and dedicated to making this system work effectively.

Regular Meetings with the Teacher

The teacher's efforts will be rewarded eventually, because these scrupulously used books are put to use when the teacher has her meetings with individuals, the third metaphorical piece of material suggested by Montessori. It is at these times that the teacher and the child together peruse the record books and the work of the child to help the child evaluate, not only his productivity, but also the quality of his work. It is a time for the two to see if the child has been accountable to the freedom extended to him.

These meetings can be on fixed days of the week or they can be scheduled randomly. They need to be conducted fairly regularly in the six to nine class. An individual child should have a meeting with his teacher at least every two weeks. As children display more and more responsibility the teacher soon realizes who needs more frequent meetings and who needs fewer. Accordingly, she can alter her schedule. In the nine to twelve class one would expect the children to be very practiced at this task because of experience. Therefore, it is conceivable that fewer formal meetings would be required, but even at that, each child needs to be able to count on having routine meetings with the teacher. And, of course, there will be those individuals who require and need more frequent meeting than others, because as yet, they are still unable to handle the freedoms offered them responsibly.

To the meeting the child brings his most recent work, finished and unfinished work, and of course, his record book. At this meeting both he and the teacher together refer to the record book to determine if the child is efficiently and wisely using his time. Depending on what comes to light, in some cases it will be during these meetings that the child will redesign his approach to his work and his free opportunities. The teacher should guide the child to create for himself solutions and suggestions for his improvement, rather than imposing on him a plan and a conclusion. This allows him to take the responsibility for his work and improvement. If a child doesn't recognize his inferior work, then the teacher must make him aware of it. This could be accomplished by comparing the inferior

work to a piece of better work. The child must first accept his deficiencies before he can commit himself to improvement.

As these three ideas – the public school curriculum, the daily journals, and the regular meetings with the children – are implemented in tandem with each other, they serve to create a foundation in which that precious freedom can be offered effectively to the children, while the balance of responsibility is maintained.

Ambiance of the Environment

Children develop best in an environment that meets their needs and one they feel belongs to them, one for which they are responsible. When judicious freedom is granted them in line with reasonable expectations, children are eager to be there. Again, to create such an environment is the teacher's responsibility and its creation is a testimony to her artistry as a Montessori teacher. To fulfill this obligation she must ensure that this classroom exhibits certain qualities.

Safe and Secure Environment

One quality worthy of immediate consideration is whether the environment feels safe and secure for the children. We have already spoken about how clearly delineated guidelines for conduct provide a security for children functioning in a classroom, but there are other important elements to ensure. Children must feel that their ideas and opinions are valued and respected, and are given due consideration when proposed. If an environment is adult-ruled, it cannot provide the necessary regard justly asked by children. The children must feel that the methods of management are fair and equitable, and then they will respond positively. The child between six and twelve is especially sensitive to these notions of justice.

Children must respect and feel respected by all people who inhabit the environment, adults and children alike. This quality, which can be given the name of Grace and Courtesy, must be preserved at all costs. Children flourish when they spend time in situations where they are appreciated and courteously regarded. Again, this is the real root of the development of self esteem. Children learn the fine art of taking care of themselves and others in an environment replete with respectful actions and methods for developing and engendering this ability. By carefully introducing these lessons and expecting a thoughtful level of observance, we enable the children to conduct themselves with civility and grace. In the process we make them consciously aware of what is expected of them and where their responsibility lies. In effect they have been given the means and the tools for choosing the good. When they fall short in their behavior, as they sometimes do because they are in process, they can be led to reason out for themselves where their deficiencies lie, and then determine how to rectify them.

Children Should Have a Say

An important element related to the respect that children feel, is for them to know that they have a say in the happenings of their class, when that say is within reason. This is directly affiliated to the idea of freedom. Children should be offered every rational opportunity to conduct themselves without interference from adults. First and foremost they should be permitted opportunities to solve their own problems. A teacher needs to provide them with the time and space for doing just this, and leave them to sort things out if they can. Dr. Montessori has said in *Education for a New World*, "Even if two children want the same material, they should be left to settle the problem for themselves unless they call for the teacher's aid."[7]

When children are left to their own devices to find solutions, they are usually satisfied with the outcome, but furthermore, they have a sense of importance about themselves and they develop the ability for problem solving. These fruits have come about by the creation of an environment that allows the child to develop self-reliance, one that has left the child free to seek his own resolution.

Since this environment belongs effectively to the children, they must assume responsibility for its care and maintenance. When they are in charge of devising the system and means for caring for the plants, animals and materials, they become consciously aware of all that needs doing within their room. They become the owners of the upkeep when they are allowed to establish the system and take charge of it. Adults do not need to impose the system for maintaining the class. They only need to free the children to do it, and then oversee in the end that it is being done. Ultimately the adult is responsible for all that is in the environment and, when needed, a judiciously placed reminder will secure the successful result.

Exciting Environment

The classroom should be an exciting and alluring place to be. When the lessons of Cosmic Education are given regularly, this contributes to the excitement . . . imaginative stories, demonstrations, experiments, and explorations about the universe! What more impressive topic could launch the child into his work adventure? Nothing. It just must be offered. Once launched, the children will have ideas of their own to express in many ways. These ways must be made available to them. Frequently, expression of interest finally manifests itself in large art projects. These are particular and individual, relating to the child's work, not activities in which the whole class seasonally engages. To satisfy this need the teacher must make preparation in two ways: she must prepare the environment by providing the required materials with different media, and secondly, she must prepare herself for granting the children a large expenditure of time, as well as enduring that which might be considered a big mess. However, when children are working consistently and responsibly on these activities, all freedoms offered at this time are absolutely warranted. This kind of freedom lends itself to the creation of a dynamic and living environment.

A classroom that is inviting to children is one where there is an element of fun and joy. Fun is defined not as amusement and festivity necessarily, but as something light and enjoyable. A component required in the implementation of this kind of classroom is the teacher's sense of humor. Children at this age respond positively to humor. Everything need not be deadly serious. Even when a teacher must impose some consequence for an infraction, she can do this with mild pleasant humor,

not derision, at the same time imparting a seriousness about the matter. This is an art and a skill, and its development is critical.

Conclusion

Dr. Montessori advises us to seduce the children to win their attention, to employ any method, "other than the use of the stick" to captivate their interest, and thus ultimately evoke their involvement. When we create an attractive, lively, engaging, and exciting place to be, one fraught with fairness and justice, trusting the child's immense capacities and competency, the children will respond positively to us. With each child and personality we must develop a relationship and a rapport, one that encompasses mutual respect. When this is accomplished, the children will trust us, and it will be then that we can help them to connect with the environment, thus enabling us to offer them freedoms that will occasion the development of responsibility. ■

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Notes

[1] Montessori, Maria, *Dr Montessori's Own Handbook*, p. 134.

[2] Sartre, Jean-Paul, "Freedom and Responsibility," *Freedom and Responsibility* p. 49.

[3] Montessori, Maria, *Education For a New World*, p. 78-79.

[4] Montessori, Maria, *The Montessori Method*, p. 92-93.

[5] Montessori, Maria, *Education For a New World*, p. 88.

[6] Ibid., p. 87-89.

[7] Ibid., p. 88.

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Montessori, Maria. *Dr Montessori's Own Handbook*. New York: Schocken, 1965.

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Understanding the Nature of the Industry and the Special Opportunities it Presents

Joe Vaz

Starting Your Own School: A Case Study Approach

Jennifer Jones, AMI diploma holder with six years experience at the primary level, three ye. rs at her current position as a primary teacher, is looking into the possibility of starting her own school. She recognizes that she has limited funds and limited administrative experience, no credit history and is looking for guidance.

OUR GOAL

- To identify major risk factors and other road blocks in our attempt to help this teacher set up a school.

The teacher, Jennifer, is now taking on the role of an entrepreneur – a risk-taker. What is the profile of an entrepreneur? Some believe that entrepreneurs have inborn traits which include little or no anxiety, great self-image and no self-doubt. **Don't believe it.** If true, these traits perhaps are typical of experienced entrepreneurs. Today's successful entrepreneur was, until recently, a scared kid.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

- The pillars of management
- P.O.S.D.C.
- Industry description
- Fragmented industry

Childcare centers are pre-school group care which vary from state to state because there are no federal regulations or guidelines. They are operated as profit and non-profit with approximately 50% falling in each category. They can be structured as family daycare, independent, one-site centers, or chains.

SOME RECOMMENDATIONS

- See your Montessori school as a national entity rather than local or regional
- Start small
- Understand that this is not a get rich quick industry (it does offer personal fulfillment and a reasonable steady income)
- Aim to be the standard bearer for early childhood education in your area

We understand that money is in short supply and that options are limited. This may really be a great blessing in disguise.

RISK FACTORS

- Demographic factors (ten year horizon; benchmarks)
- Regulatory environment
- Quality of management

You must have a good sense of the ongoing demand by area parents; employment patterns (localization); preschool, after school and summer programs.

Be aware and informed of regulatory issues; safety programs. Exercise due diligence; check those references.

Operate on the principle that reputation is everything. The depth of experience is crucial. Do not open a new center with new teacher!! A minimum of three years experience working as teacher is strongly recommended.

FACILITIES/SPACE REQUIREMENTS

- Stay focused. You are in the educational business. This is not an opportunity for real estate speculation. Buying property to sell on appreciation is not recommended.

Location

- Location is the most critical element in identifying and attracting customers. You will usually draw from a five mile radius. *Don't let an offer of cheap space overshadow your need for a good location.*

To Own or To Rent?

- Owning may be the ideal way to ensure control…but not necessarily the best option.

Building a new facility or converting an existing building is a monumental task and certainly not for those with limited resources. Zoning codes, fire, building safety, occupancy and facilities for disabled under ADA, new building or remodel house – all are expensive propositions. Further, there are significant soft costs. You will need outside help: architect, engineer, contractor, attorney.

- For the new operator, leasing/renting is often a more viable option.

If you are leasing, a wide range of choices are available: churches, schools with excess capacity, community buildings, commercial centers. Churches and similar facilities are usually in excellent locations. They have good visibility and are close to neighborhoods you have targeted to serve. These facilities will provide you access to an area that would otherwise not be open to you, e.g., they may be in residential zones that will not have available childcare centers.

There is economy in investible funds with opportunities to expand or have special programs.

In most cases these facilities are ideal for your use as a Montessori school – with some minor modification to prepare for practical life and the outside area for outdoor environment. In most churches you can start small and expand by leasing additional classrooms.

Rental arrangements can be tied to gross revenues. You can negotiate an agreement to increase rent as enrollment increases. In an ownership situation, you will begin with a big mortgage payment without the enrollment to pay for it.

Lease Terms

Churches are not given to long term leases. They may want to get out if they find that your program does not mesh with the church activity or they decide they would like to start their own program – say 10 years maximum.

Overcome this barrier by breaking down the lease into shorter periods. Perhaps a two-year lease with two two-year options – your options – or a mu-

tual consent provision after two years.

Good relationships are vital. Stay in close touch with the church organization. If it makes sense, participate in their outreach programs, as an individual and as a school.

All playground equipment and equipment belong to church at termination.

Leasing Disadvantages

Landlord-tenant relationships can be problematic. Joint use of space, parking, janitorial services, and cleanliness are some of the problem areas. Some conflict between Sunday school and Montessori school staff is inevitable, so every week the materials must be packed away and set up again on Monday morning.

Churches may be selective with whom they do business. You may have to incorporate as a non-profit at the beginning. See an attorney or accountant (CPA).

Signage can be a problem. The church may limit you to a small portable sign or only allow you to share space on their marquee. This equates to no curbside presence which is very important.

ENROLLMENT

- Building enrollment

The marketing of your school is crucial to building enrollment. Advertising through yellow pages, brochures, open houses and conducted tours is successful in this regard. Videos can be a valuable tool also. Remember, parents are your salespersons in the field. Word of mouth is quite often your best advertising campaign.

- Enrollment period for the primary program occurs throughout the year.
- Do not use annual contracts or provisions if you do not plan to enforce the stated terms.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

A small venture of the type that we have described will initially not qualify for bank financing. Why? The risk is excessive. Banks want a track record – usually three years of activity with a history of profitability and other criteria: liquidity and leverage. So what are the sources?

1. Personal savings
2. Family and friends
3. Small unsecured loans
4. Leasing

Avoid high risk lenders and consultants who will package your loan for a fee and shop the financial institutions. This is usually an exercise in futility, with few or no strings attached. However, if you fail, the emotional cost can be high.

Money from friends and relatives is usually a loan unless you choose to take them on as equity partners, in which event they are venture capitalists with their repayment being tied to the success of the business.

Whatever the question the answer is probably "cash flow." You are doomed to fail financially if:

- you build or commit excessive funds,
- you do not control creeping costs,
- you underprice your services

If all this makes you uptight, keep the message of the serenity prayer your guide to action:

God grant me the serenity to accept
the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can
and the wisdom to know the difference. ■

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Freedom to Develop

Silvana Montanaro, M.D.

"The social question of childhood penetrates deeply into our inner lives, rousing our consciences and stirring us to act. A child is not a stranger, one simply to be observed from outside. Rather, childhood constitutes the most important element in an adult's life, for it is in his early years that a man is made."[1]

When the child finds obstacles to his development "the child does not lose one of his products: he loses himself. Because his masterpiece, the one he makes up in the innermost of his creative genius, is the new human being."[2]

We all must have freedom to develop because we can develop at any age and until the last minute. But now we want to talk about children in the first years of life, the period of time that is the foundation of personality as a Japanese proverb says very well: "The mind developed in the first three years lasts 100 years."

"The concept of liberty in the education of very young children should be understood as a condition most favorable to their physical and psychological development. A teacher (parent/adult) who is urged on by a profound reverence for life, while she is making her interesting observations, should respect the gradual unfolding of a child's life. And education is the active assistance required for the normal expansion of this life."[3]

Who is a child? Montessori says that "a child is constantly being pushed on by his great mission, that of growing up and becoming a man. Because a child is himself unaware of his mission and of his internal needs, and adults are far from being able to interpret them, many conditions prevail both at home and in school that impede the expansion of his infant life."[4] This vision can give us a direct orientation in our task of working with persons who are supposed to care for the child's development. In this quote it is implied that:

• Children have within a force, the force of life, pushing them to grow and this force cannot be resisted. "Life increases, becomes manifest, and perfects the individual, but it is confined within limits and is governed by insuperable laws."[5]

• Children need people who can remove the obstacles from their environment so that the progression along the path of their self-realization can be achieved.

"The inner force can't be stopped, so if we do not help it go the right way, if we do not let the child use it in a positive way, this force will become a force of destruction, like a river stopped on its course. The consequence is tragic: when the child is hindered in his development, there is not only a deviation but the child loses himself his masterpiece!"[6]

The second component, the removal of obstacles, requires good knowledge of human development, an understanding of life itself. This is clearly affirmed by Montessori in all her books. "Childhood constitutes the most important element in an adult's life, for it is in his early years that a man is made." Medical knowledge teaches the consequences of the obstacles to the physical development: malformations and even death. The same can happen in the psychological development but these consequences are not so evident like the physical ones.

Let me try to explain this better. Any development needs an environment and this is the relationship we find everywhere there is life: living beings and their environments.

The educational environment should be prepared by adults who have love and knowledge. The freedom to develop is possible only when there is a place, a family, in which exist these two conditions for growth. It is this relationship that I would like to be able to illustrate to you because after many years of work and experience in this field I still find so difficult to make parents/teachers/adults (not Montessorians of course!) understand it.

The first understanding is about "the study of the secret needs of early childhood in order to assist it. Such an objective demands, on the part of an adult, greater care and closer attention to the true needs of a child; and, practically, it leads to the creation of a suitable environment where a child can pursue a series of interesting objectives and thus channel his random energies into orderly and well-executed actions."[7]

It is important to underline "the true needs" of the child and not the needs related to our personal ideas about education. So it becomes clear that "freedom to develop" will not be possible without acquiring the knowledge of these needs in order to be able to distinguish between true and false ones.

Today this choice is even more difficult because we have more money to invest in education, so we are bombarded by propaganda/advertising pushing us to buy many unnecessary things that become immediately an "obstacle" to development. Certainly many of you are very conscious of the child's true needs but for the few who never had the opportunity to think about what it is usually prepared for a newborn by good intentioned parents/adults, let us see how easily, from the very first moment after birth, we put obstacles to the "freedom to develop."

Which are the true needs of a newborn? The first and most important is a person, the mother, to attach to in order to survive physically (protection and special food) and psychologically (emotional security of the human relationship). It is to be remembered that no newborn mammal can continue to live without this special person, the mother, with whom a preferential relationship can be established. Life, in its great wisdom, has put together in one human being, all that the newborn needs in order to have "freedom to develop." This very special situation cannot be deeply understood unless we think about where the newborn comes from, the period of life we call pregnancy. Prenatal life is the special beginning of our life, the time we call pregnancy, and it is experienced only by mammals. Such a situation was not present on our planet until mammals appeared 130 million years ago. It is a time lived inside of a living being who becomes a very special being especially related to the new child. If we keep in mind the significance of evolution, we

come to the guideline that "Ontogenesis recapitulates Phylogenesis:" in a very short time we pass through all the phases of the History of Life and we repeat it in our personal development.

Is this perspective useful for finding the true needs of human newborns? I think so because the true needs are the ones that come from life, the needs developed during its evolution, and it is in this frame of reference that we discover the importance of attachment, special food, active experiences in the environment.

While oxygen, through respiration, is provided by the external environment and a newborn has the necessary organs developed to function, food cannot be reached unless the mother (the only person needed at this moment) accepts the child and guides him near the breast. This shows clearly that while we respond to a true physical need – food – at the same time we provide for a true psychological need: to reestablish direct contact and to experience the only well known person who must now become the necessary link and mediator with the new environment.

In our western maternity hospital these true needs are completely unattended and a lot of wrongs occur at the very beginning of life with the danger of great and permanent damage for the body and the mind. The wrongs are:

1. separation from the mother who is also in need of the contact with the newborn
2. artificial food producing allergies and difficulty in digestion and eaten in loneliness
3. restriction of movement because of cribs and wrong clothes
4. lack of natural stimuli from the people and the environment

Let us briefly consider these mistakes that could be easily avoided and thus produce such an improvement in the human development. Montessori has understood, in depth, the first three years of life and recognized their fundamental importance in the construction of human personality. But she gave also precious and practical advice for dealing with newborns and toddlers: a low bed, an area for active and free movement, weaning table and chair, possibility of reaching the sink, etc. These are the inexpensive materials we can offer to children from the very beginning.

We know how to prepare people for their great mission as parents so that they can prepare the simple but effective environment for freedom to develop. In the prepared environment we will observe the miracle of unfolding life that becomes possible because of our commitment to the Montessori vision of human development. ■

Notes

[1] Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, Ballantine Books, p. 4.

[2] Maria Montessori, *Autoeducazione nelle scuole elementari*, Garzanti, Milano, 1962, p. 21.

[3] Maria Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*, Ballantine Books, Ch. 3, p. 61.

[4] Ibid., p. 62.

[5] Ibid., p. 61.

[6] Maria Montessori, *Autoeducazione nelle scuole elementari*, Garzanti, Milano 1962.

[7] Maria Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*, Ballantine Books, p. 62.

Silvana Montanaro, M.D. earned her degree in Medicine and Surgery, with a speciality in Psychiatry, from the University of Rome. In 1955 she joined the staff of the Rome Montessori School for Assistants to Infancy, where she taught mental hygiene, child neuropsychiatry, nutrition and obstetrics. Dr. Montanaro is currently the Director of Training for the Assistants to Infancy course in Rome and serves on the board of directors of AMI. She has also been the Director of Training for the AMI Assistants to Infancy courses in London and Mexico City, and was responsible for bringing this training to the United States.

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Beyond Open House – Sharing Montessori's Perspective with Parents

Carla Caudill-Waechter

Once parents become interested in Montessori education – whether through word-of-mouth, an open house or other means – and decide to enroll their child, our initial communication goal with them is clear: we describe Dr. Montessori's vision of childhood as represented by our school and draw the family into sharing this vision.

For example, think back to your first experience with your school. What was the impetus for your decision to make a commitment to this particular school? We all have our own reasons and needs; yet, something drew each of us to this school, and something continues to keep us attached. In most cases, whatever our individual circumstances, it is a common perspective, an outlook that we share with others at the school; this shared vision is what binds us together into a community. So, when new families join us, it is important to them as individuals as well as to our community that we share the vision of the school.

Granted, this is an idealistic outlook. We all know the reality that many parents choose a school because they are seeking quality services and programs, academic excellence, a safe place that will teach the "right" values. Often, parents do not understand how a Montessori school differs from a traditional school, and they worry about how their child will "make the transition." Thus, unless we effectively share with them Montessori's vision and our quest to help children become responsible, caring, contributing members of society, we could face an ambivalent relationship with these parents.

In 1966 Mario Montessori addressed an AMI conference in Washington, D.C.; these same issues were pertinent them.

The problem faced by Montessori education in America is caused by the influence of the press and public opinion on the process of education...This goal of producing accelerated early scholastic achievement for its own sake is not part of the Montessori method, although early academic development is often one outcome of our work with young children.

The real essence of the Montessori method is to help the natural process of human development, to create integrated personalities; that is, people who have a sense of responsibility, who know their limitations, who have a sense of duty toward themselves and society, and who, having a clear vision, can make a positive contribution to solving social problems.

The essential factor in the Montessori outlook is that it is not the adult who creates the child; it is the child who, through his experiences, creates a human being. Dr. Montessori did not consider her work simply a method of education, but rather a means of helping the creative energy in the child to reach its end. The central objective of Montessori education is to assist in the creation of the man that God meant him to be – not the man who turns his increased intellectual ability to purposes of destruction.

American Montessori schools have, in many instances, departed from this ideal. They place their emphasis on quick and easily observed results. But the heart of the matter – the integrated personality – is often forgotten. Schools where this is true do no harm to children, but they give both children and parents far less than they have the right to expect.

The sources of the problem are complex. Key is a mistaken impression of Montessori that leads many parents to see this as a way to give their children a head start in the race to Harvard. This is exacerbated by the commonly weak role of the American parent in providing close guidance and moral/ethical education, in contrast to places like India and Ceylon, where parent-child relationships are closer and Montessori education is flourishing.

What Dr. Montessori offers is far more than a curriculum leading to a rich intellectual life. She offers a key, which gives clarity and focus to the inner energy which leads the child during his development.

Often, the Montessori environment itself provides the first glimpse to parents of our vision. They come to visit, look around, and decide, "Yes, I want my child to be in this kind of place." Then the process of application and enrollment begins; many schools have in place a pre-enrollment process to acquaint parents with the operation and outlook of the school. If this is not done prior to enrollment, it is usually done during the first six weeks or so of the child's attendance. Often this process includes viewing a video about Montessori education, observing a class and an interview with staff members; most schools follow this with varying degrees of formality and intensity. Then, the child enters a class; parent conferences are held once or twice a year; parents are invited (or required) to observe; general parent meetings are held on occasion, which some parents attend.

We Montessori educators recognize the need to relate effectively to parents' concerns and needs in order to maintain on-going communication throughout their child's years with us. Of course, this also helps us resolve any problems that may arise during that time and helps ensure continuing enrollment for the school.

Let's go beyond that. As Montessori educators, we have skills and training that can help us inspire parents to provide the crucial emotional atmosphere in the home that will best empower their child's development. Most importantly, we have a vision of human development to share with the world. This is not to say that we should expect that all parents will become experts on Montessori education. However, sharing our vision in an informative way will not only build the trust and confidence we need in our relationships with parents, it will help all of us adults at our task. As Dr. Montessori said, "The relationship between adult and child is in the spiri-

tual realm; as adults, we have much to learn from children."

There is a window of opportunity for us when parents first enroll their child; it's at this time that we share not just the nuts and bolts of our *Parent Handbook*, but also nurture in parents the on-going appreciation of the miracle of development. In *The Secret of Childhood*, Montessori states, "In the course of its psychological development the baby achieves things so marvelous as to be miraculous, and it is only habit that makes us indifferent spectators." Let us resolve to help parents (and ourselves) maintain faith in the child, in the special energy, the divine power, that manifests in the formation of each human being.

To this end, Montessori's book, *The Child in the Family*, is most helpful. I propose that this book could become the basis of an introductory short course of guided study for parents of entering children, or even (for the ambitious!) open to the entire community. Maybe you recall this book. It's relatively short, easily read, and an inspiring view of family life. The chapters are entitled, "The Blank Page," "The Newborn Child," "The Spiritual Embryo," "The New Education," "My Method in General," "The Character of the Child," "The Child's Environment," "The Child in the Family," "The New Teacher," and "The Adult and the Child."

Montessori outlines principles for effective parenting and illustrates them with memorable anecdotes throughout this book. These could be guides to stimulate parents' discussion of their home environments and situations. Just to give you a sampling, here are a few quotes from Chapter 5, "The New Education," and from Chapter 9, "The Child in the Family."

"The adult must acquire the sensitivity to recognize all the child's needs; only thus can he give the child all the help that is necessary. If we were to establish a principle, it would be that what is necessary is the child's participation in our lives, for in that period in which he must learn to act, he cannot learn well if he does not see how, just as he could not learn language if he were deaf. To extend to the child this hospitality, that is, to allow him to participate in our lives, is difficult, but costs nothing; it depends solely on the emotional preparation of the adult."

"...The prejudice that condemns children to sleep is very popular among northern peoples and is without any foundation, but we accept it without argument. One time a child came to me saying that he wanted to see something very beautiful, of which he had heard much talk – the stars. He had never seen them because he had to go to bed very early. It is easy to understand that the child condemned to sleep must find the inner work of construction extremely fatiguing because he is forced to struggle with the adult..."

"...Until now, the principal training parents gave their children consisted of correcting their inadequacies, teaching them that which appear to be good and right, although not so much by example as with moral precept and admonition."

"...The new education prepares an adaptive environment for the child and recognizes in general that he loves work and order for themselves."

"...Now let me enumerate the principles that will help the mother find the best way for her child.

"The most important is to respect all the reasonable forms of activity in which the child engages and try to understand them...

"The second principle is this: We must support as much as possible the child's desires for activity; not wait on him, but educate him to be independent.

"The third principle is that we must be most watchful in our relationships with children because they are quite sensitive – more than we know – to external influences."

"It is not absolutely necessary that we appear perfect in the eyes of our children; rather, it is necessary that we recognize our defects and patiently accept the children's just observations. Recognizing this principle, we can excuse ourselves before children when we have done something unjust."

"...To follow attentively all the spiritual expressions of a child is to free him so he can manifest his needs and thereby guarantee for himself all the external means for his progress. This is the premise for his freedom and harmonious development and the germination of his energies."

Is this not a template for understanding? This could be the foundation for a study course, which would enhance understanding of child development as well as thoughtful participation in the school community.

Over the years, visiting AMI schools throughout the country as a consultant, I have noted certain trends – one being what many of you in this room deal with – a definite decline in attendance at traditional "parent meetings," despite your best efforts to inform people well in advance, provide childcare, offer interesting programs, perhaps even require attendance in some instances. Despite everybody's good intentions, only a few dedicated parents show up regularly for these events.

It seems to me that an introductory study such as I've just mentioned might help motivate people to attend future meetings; at the least, we would have provided a basic foundation for understanding Montessori education and child development. Logistically, this course would be repeated annually, perhaps more often. It could be organized as a series of weekly discussions, possibly open to the entire community as well as new parents. It would be offered to parents in an inviting way, an alluring way, rather than as a "requirement." Find a way to make this an event that people want to come to, not another one of those "have to's."

After this introductory study, it's important to continue to offer a well-rounded variety of informative and useful events. We all realize that most parents come to meetings for one main reason – to talk about their child. Be sure to "touch base" with them in this regard; weave anecdotes about the children into a presentation to illustrate the abstract concept you may be presenting, just as Montessori did in the previous excerpts.

In building a program for parents (and here I'm referring to this introductory study course as well as on-going, general meetings), there are certain basic elements to consider, including scheduling, format, and content. Parents, administrators, and teachers must work together on these elements. Everyone has a role, a responsibility, in implementing a program that will help all of us better serve the child.

The following ideas represent several ways of building better community and communication. Of course, every school has its own circumstances to consider, and this list should not be considered mandatory or all inclusive! These are simply some ideas to consider regarding scheduling, formats, and content of your parent communication efforts. Not every idea will be doable at every school, and there are many more great ideas among you; so, consider the following as a starting point.

- Parent events should be included in your master calendar planning. It's a good idea to first meet as a staff to determine needs and priorities, then survey parents to determine their needs and priorities. Well in advance, learn their preferences and needs regarding times and topics, then set up programs for the school year. There are many approaches to scheduling, such as the following examples:

  Some schools require parents to attend extensive orientation sessions prior to their child's entrance; other schools offer these sessions during the first six weeks of school.

  Some schools have parent events at a regular time, for example, the third Thursday evening of every month throughout the year.

  Other schools schedule an intensive seminar at the beginning of every year; or, this could be over a weekend or three or four evenings during one week.

  In a large school, it may be necessary to double schedule a program to accommodate the numerous work schedules you're dealing with and to give parents an option of which to attend.

  Schedule both "in-class" meetings for the parents of each class and "all-school" meetings.

  Remember not to over-schedule and to include social events (such as potluck suppers and holiday parties) as well as informational events.
- Plan to make childcare available during the meeting; if parents know that they can attend the meeting and feel secure about their child's activity at that time, they are much more likely to attend. The caregivers should follow established basic procedures; it's most helpful if they, and the children, are already acquainted. If this is an evening program, make sure that the plans are for appropriate pre-bedtime activities. A "pajama party," with kids attending in their pj's, quiet games or stories will promote an easy bedtime when arriving home. Remember the anecdote about the child who wanted to see the stars? How about arranging some stargazing?
- Consider a variety of formats – panels, roundtables, lectures, videos, study groups, classroom tours, demonstration of materials, alumni visits/talks – these are all tried and true.
- If you have a successful "tradition," use it, as long as it's effective.
- Open some informational events to the public; for example, when your AMI/USA consultant visits. Consider asking some parents to help with media publicity for this.
- Invite an outside speaker from the community; for example, network with a healthcare provider to present a program on hygiene or wellness. Often, this can result in a mutually beneficial partnering for the school and outside speaker.
- Participate in a local, regional, or national event, such as "Turn-off TV Week."
- Besides general parent meetings and individual conferences, be sure to encourage staff to initiate parent contact through one-on-one conversations or written notes, (especially to relate something nice that happened at school regarding their child) and responding promptly to phone calls; it's especially important to greet parents warmly by name.
- Written progress reports may be appropriate at the end of the year. Older elementary children may write a self-evaluation, go over it with the teacher for her comments, and then present it at a family conference. Should you initiate such a plan at your school, be sure to first plan and establish guidelines with your staff as to expectations regarding format and content.
- School newsletters are invaluable in communicating not just news and information, but also the unique character of the school. Be sure to include a letter from each class, articles highlighting any school events, or mention articles about the school in the local media. This is also a good place to include a thoughtful article on a parenting or pedagogical issue. More and more schools have their own web page; be sure to link with the AMI site!
- Play videotaped highlights of your classes at general parent meetings. If parents are unable to observe, a video profile of their child would certainly be welcomed and could also be used at their parent conference.
- Remember to include parent participation as classroom guests to present a special event or program, and as field trip or Going-Out chaperones. Again, it's important to set the stage with preparation and guidelines.
- Parent education programs should succinctly describe the nature of child development, including the basic tenents of Montessori theory. This would include topics such as the human tendencies, the planes of development, the prepared environment, a historical overview of the Montessori movement, the role of the directress, development of independence, abstraction, sensitive periods, freedom of movement, cosmic education, grace and courtesy, moral development, discipline and will, and the acquisition of culture. Remember that parents don't have to become experts, but the more knowledgeable they are about human development, the more ability they will have to optimize their relationship with their child.
- Organize study groups for those who want to delve more deeply into a particular area.
- Include references and descriptions of the second and third planes in your discussion with parents of toddlers and primary children, and refer back to the first or second plane in discussion with parents of older children. This will help them see "the big picture" of childhood. and it will also provide a base for parents' commitment to your elementary program.
- Welcome toddler and children's house parents into the elementary class for observation.
- Be sure that your elementary staff is involved in introducing cosmic edu-

cation to those parents whose children are still on the first plane of development. Present the "cosmic drama" to parents, just as it is presented to elementary children, then explain the "how's and why's" of our approach to them. By repeating this often, we can enable parents to feel comfortable in making the inevitable explanation to friends and family about their choice of Montessori elementary for their child.

Parents and educators have the freedom and the responsibility to work together for the children. Our task requires a blend of idealism and pragmatism, intellectual effort and spiritual preparation so that we may be prepared to assist our children's growth. In closing, here is an excerpt from the first chapter of *The Child in the Family*: "We adults, in our interpretation and treatment of children, not only have erred in certain details of education, or in some imperfect forms of schooling, but have pursued a course of action which is wholly wrong. And our mistakes have now generated a new social and moral question. The dissension between children and adults has existed unchanged for centuries, but the young have now tipped the balance. It is this reversal that has impelled us to action, not only in the direction of educators, but toward all adults, especially parents." ■

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Some Conceptual Considerations in the Interdisciplinary Study of Immigrant Children

Marcelo M. Suárez Orozco, Ph.D.

Since 1965 the United States has formally admitted over 20 million new immigrants. The rate of immigration intensified in the 1990s to an average of about 1 million new legal immigrants per annum. The vast majority of new immigrants to the United States are non-English speaking people of color coming from the Afro-Caribbean basin, Asia, and Latin America. New research suggests that there are between 2 and 4 million "undocumented" immigrants living in the United States. It is further estimated that each year some 200,000 to 400,000 undocumented immigrants enter the United States. (National Research Council 1997) This post-1965 wave of immigration is the driving force behind a significant transformation that will have profound implications for the remaking of American democracy, society, and economy. (M. Suárez-Orozco 1998)

Immigrant children are the fastest growing sector of the U.S. child population. (Landale and Oropesa 1995) Roughly one in five children in the U.S. today lives in an immigrant-headed household. Immigrant children are now present in substantial numbers in school districts throughout the country. In California, for example, students of limited English proficiency jumped from fewer than 500,000 in 1985 to about 1.5 million a decade later. (Rumbaut 1995) They now make up approximately 20% of the California school population. While California leads the nation in terms of numbers of immigrant students, no area of the country is unaffected by immigration.

In New York City public schools today, 48% of all children come from immigrant households speaking over 100 different languages. Even if immigration tends to be highly concentrated in a handful of states (such as California, New York, Florida, Texas, and Illinois), immigrant youth are found in all areas of the nation and in diverse school systems. Today 42% of all school children enrolled in Dodge City, Kansas come from immigrant backgrounds. Indeed, we are not in Kansas anymore.

Theoretical Considerations in the Study of the New Immigration

In recent years the study of immigration has been dominated by labor economists, sociologists, demographers, and – to a lesser extent – cultural anthropologists. While some topics, such as the economic causes and consequences of immigration, have generated a great deal of work, other areas remain virtual *terra incognita*. The effect of immigration on children is one such neglected area. While in recent years there have been a few excellent studies of immigration and children, many areas of the problem remain under-explored and under-theorized.

In the area of theory-building, important work remains to be done. The foundational theoretical work on immigration to the United States has been largely based on the experiences of European immigrants entering the country in the earlier decades of this century. (Portes 1997) Much of this work came to privileged concepts such as "assimilation" and "acculturation," (see, *inter alia*, Park and Burgess 1969; Gordon 1964; Alba and Nee 1997). Assimilation, for example, was said to proceed along various paths on what was depicted as a generally upwardly mobile journey. As Robert Bellah once noted, "The United States was planned for progress" (in Williamson 1996: 175) and each wave of immigrants was said to recapitulate the national destiny. The argument was elegant in its simplicity: the longer immigrants were in the U.S., the more Americanized they became, the better they would do in terms of schooling, health, and income.

In recent years a number of distinguished social theorists have observed that the conceptual apparatus based on an earlier era of immigration may no longer be adequate to address the experiences of new immigrants. Some have argued that immigration is now structured by powerful but little understood forms of transnationalism, requiring new categories of understanding and conceptual approaches (see, *inter alia*, Basch et al., 1995; Levitt 1998). A number of prominent sociologists including Gans (1992), Portes and Zhou (1993), Rumbaut (1996), and Waters (1996) have further argued that a new hourglass "segmentation" in American economy and society has been shaping new patterns of immigrant insertion into American life.

This new research suggests what might be broadly termed a "trimodal" pattern of adaptation. Some immigrants today are achieving extraordinary patterns of upward mobility – quickly moving into the well-remunerated knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy in ways never seen before in the history of U.S. immigration. On the opposite side of the hourglass economy, large numbers of low-skilled immigrants of color find themselves in increasingly segregated sectors of the economy and society – locked into low-skilled service jobs without much promise of status mobility. (Portes and Zhou 1993) In between these two patterns are yet other immigrant groups which approximate the norms of the majority population – "disappearing" into American institutions and culture without much notice.

This trimodal socioeconomic pattern seems to have an isomorphic relation to how the children of today's immigrants tend to do in school. In the last few years there have been a number of studies on the performance of immigrant children in schools. The data suggest a complex picture. In broad strokes, we can say that immigrant children today fit a trimodal pattern of school adaptation. Some immigrant children seem to do quite well in schools, surpassing native-born children in terms of grades, performance in standardized tests, and attitudes towards education. (Kao and Tienda 1995) Other immigrants tend to overlap with native-born children (see Waters 1996; Rumbaut 1995: 22-27). Yet others tend to achieve below their na-

tive-born peers. (Portes and Hao 1998; Kao and Tienda 1995; Rumbaut 1995; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995)

In general, studies examining patterns that lead to school success tend to emphasize "the ideologies of opportunity" and "cultures of optimism" that motivate immigrant parents to migrate. (Gibson 1988; Kao and Tienda 1995; Suárez-Orozco 1989; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995; Tuan 1995) Some scholars have argued successful adaptations among immigrants may relate to the patterns of cultural, economic and social capital immigrants are able to deploy in the new land. Other scholars more specifically single out immigrant "cultural values" said to promote educational success. (Sue and Okazaki 1990) Yet others suggest that some immigrant families succeed by developing culturally-specific strategies which inoculate their children against the hostilities and negative attitudes they encounter in the new culture. (De Vos 1992) Other studies note that successful immigrant parents are able to maintain social control by orienting the children away from various negative interpersonal and cultural aspects of the host culture. (Zhou and Bankston 1998) This line of work suggests that immigrant parents who are able to maintain their own cultural patterns of social sanctioning and who actively resist a whole array of distopic cultural practices and beliefs in the host country – specifically attitudes towards authority, discipline, homework, peer relations, and dating – tend to have children who are more successful in schools.

A number of studies have concentrated on school failure among the children of immigrants. Scholars working on the area of immigrant school underachievement have explored a variety of relevant factors. Some scholars have examined the structural barriers to advancement facing many immigrants of color today. (Orfield 1998) Others have emphasized the sociocultural and linguistic practices involved in the schooling of children in poor and highly segregated inner city schools – the schools many newly arrived immigrants, especially those from the Afro-Caribbean and Latin American regions, tend to enroll. (Trueba 1998)

A Paradox in Search of Explanation

The issue of variability in school adaptations and outcomes among ethnic and immigrant groups has received some attention in the scholarly literature. (Ogbu and Simons 1998; Jacob and Jordan 1993; Gibson and Ogbu 1991) However, there have been, to date, few systematic comparisons examining changes over time as different groups of immigrant youth adapt to American schools.

Yet some recent data suggest an unsettling pattern in search of further robust empirical and theoretical treatment: among many immigrant groups today length of residence in the United States seems associated with declining health, school achievement, and aspirations (see Kao and Tienda 1995; Rumbaut 1995; Steinberg 1996; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995; Vernez, Abrahamse, and Quigley 1996).

In the area of immigration and health, for example, we find a number of counterintuitive results. Immigrants, while they tend to share a number of "at-risk" characteristics – such as high rates of poverty – tend nevertheless to be healthier than their non-immigrant counterparts. (Brown et al. 1998) Immigrant youth tend to be healthier than non-immigrants from their own ethnic groups. A recent national study of health among 20,000 randomly selected U.S. teens directed by Katheen Harris, however, reveals an alarming trend:

Foreign-born youth experience fewer physical health problems, have less experience with sex, are less likely to engage in delinquent and violent behavior and are less likely to use controlled substances than native-born youth. Findings of health deterioration rather than improvement were remarkably consistent. Among foreign-born youth, statistical analysis showed the longer the time since arrival in the United States, the poorer was the adolescents' physical health and the greater the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. Specific health measures analyzed were general health, missed school due to health or emotional problems, learning difficulties, obesity, asthma and health risk behaviors involving sexual intercourse, unprotected sex, delinquency, violence and substance abuse. Mexican, Central and South American, Filipino, and other Asian youth showed the strongest negative effects from becoming Americanized. For example, foreign-born Mexican youth are less likely than native-born youth of Mexican parents to miss school for a health or emotional problem, to have learning difficulties, to be obese or to suffer asthma. They also are less likely to have had sex, to engage in delinquent or violent acts or to use three or more controlled substances. (*Migration News* 1998: 3)

In the area of schooling, Steinberg reports the findings of his national survey of over 20,000 teenagers, "...the longer a student's family has lived in this country, the worse the youngster's school performance and mental health. ...Foreign-born students – who, incidentally, report significantly more discrimination than American-born youngsters and significantly more difficulty with the English language – nevertheless earn higher grades in school than their American-born counterparts.

"...The more Americanized students – those whose families have been living here longer – are less committed to doing well in school than their immigrant counterparts. Immigrants spend more time on homework, are more attentive in class, are more oriented to doing well in school, and are more likely to have friends who think academic achievement is important.

"Differences between immigrants and non-immigrants are also apparent when we look at various manifestations of mental health. Immigrant adolescents report less drug use, less delinquency, less misconduct in school, fewer psychosocial problems, and less psychological distress than do American-born youngsters.

"The adverse effects of Americanization are seen among Asian and Latino youngsters alike (that is, within each of the two largest populations of immigrant youth in this country), with achievement decreasing, and problems increasing, with each successive generation. Instead of finding what one might reasonably expect – that the longer a family has been in this country, the better the child will be faring in our schools – we find exactly the reverse. Our findings, as well as those from several other studies, suggest that becoming Americanized is detrimental to youngsters' achievement, and ter-

rible for their overall mental health." (Steinberg 1996: 97-98)

Rubén Rumbaut working with Alejandro Portes found a similar pattern in a survey of over 15,000 seniors, juniors, and sophomores in San Diego, California, and Dade County, Florida. He writes, "an important finding supporting our earlier reported research, is the negative association of length of residence in the United States with both GPA and aspirations. Time in the United States is, as expected, strongly predictive of improved English reading skills; but despite that seeming advantage, longer residence in the United States and second-generation status (that is, being born in the United States) are connected to declining academic achievement and aspirations, net of other factors." (Rumbaut 1995: 46-48, emphasis in the original)

In a different voice, the Reverend Virgil Elizondo, rector of the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio, articulates the same point: "I can tell by looking in their eyes how long they've been here. They come sparkling with hope, and the first generation finds hope rewarded. Their children's eyes no longer sparkle." (quoted in Suro 1998: 13) While the work of Portes and Rumbaut (see Rumbaut 1995), Steinberg (1996: 97-98), Kao and Tienda (1995), and others independently report similar findings, more sophisticated longitudinal data are needed to explore this important issue. While many immigrant children do brilliantly in schools, others, over time, seem to display more distopic adaptations.

Conceptual Themes in the Study of Immigrant Children

In order to examine the multiple paths immigrant children are able to make for themselves in their new country, we devised an interdisciplinary, longitudinal, and comparative study of the adaptations of immigrant children in American schools. The Longitudinal Immigrant Adaptation Study (LISA) was inaugurated in 1997 at Harvard University with funding from the National Science Foundation, W.T. Grant Foundation, and Spencer Foundation. It is an experience-near psychosocial study of the factors involved in shaping the changing lives of immigrant children. Our sample consists of 400 youth (eighty in each group) from Central American (including El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua), China (originating in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Taiwan), the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico.

Unlike previous studies of immigrant children – which often collapse foreign-born immigrants and U.S.-born children of immigrants in the same category – the LISA project employs a carefully constructed set of controls. *Inter alia*, youth participating in the study are 9 to 14-year-old recent immigrants (i.e., foreign-born and having spent at least two-thirds of their lives in their country of origin). The study is structured around an interdisciplinary psychosocial methodology which deploys a number of research tools borrowed from cultural anthropology and cultural psychology (see Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco 1995).

Any systematic study of immigrant children that is non-reductionistic must contend with the problems inherent in multilevel psychosocial analyses. (De Vos and Suárez-Orozco 1990) Yet multilevel, interdisciplinary strategies are needed because single-factor studies seem doomed to reduce extremely complex processes to disciplinary cliches. Reducing the experiences of immigrant children to the class background of their parents is a good example. A class-based argument fails to address some critical questions such as why some children from poor immigrant groups do much better than others (see Zhou and Bankston 1998). Such approach also fails to explain why, when class differences are held constant, immigrant children do constantly better in schools than their non-immigrant peers.

Our current research is guided by a multilevel conceptual framework that takes into consideration both "incoming resources" as well as a variety of "host culture variables." The variables outlined in our conceptual framework – in various ways and with various force – are the major vectors that structure the schooling experiences and outcomes of immigrant youth. These factors help mold the emerging attitudes, identities, and behaviors of immigrant students. They are co-determinants of the youth's evolving cultural models and social practices regarding schooling.

Under "incoming resources" we include the usual predictors of schooling outcomes such as SES, parental literacy, and education. Previous physical and psychological health, as well as previous schooling experiences and English proficiency are also relevant to an immigrant's subsequent adaptation. A very powerful variable mediating school outcomes – a factor that incredibly is nearly always neglected in the literature – is the child's immigrant legal status.

Under "host culture variables" we include a series of factors known to be relevant to the schooling strategies of youth. What are the occupational opportunities available to immigrants in their local settings? What structural barriers do immigrants encounter? Are they penetrating the knowledge-intensive sectors of the economy? Are they recruited by co-ethnics into an ethnic enclave? Are they finding work in the low-skill service sector? Are they finding work in the underground economy? How does the changing relationship between schooling outcomes and the economic opportunity structure affect the cultural models and social practices deployed by immigrant families and communities?

The recent work of Dowell Myers (1998) suggests a worrisome trend. In an ambitious study of the Mexican-origin population in Southern California, Myers found that while Mexican immigrant youth have in recent years made impressive gains in their educational adaptations, they are facing a pattern of declining returns to education in terms of the wages they are able to command in the post-educational opportunity structure. John Ogbu and his colleagues have argued that when there is a de-coupling between efforts and outcomes in schools and the reward system in the opportunity structure, sooner or later, many children give up on schools as the principal route for status mobility. (Obgu and Simons 1998)

While the dialectic between schooling and the opportunity structure is highly relevant, other host culture variables must not be overlooked. Among many immigrants today, neighborhood safety is an important concern. For many children the fear of violence is ever present.

A number of children participating

in the LISA project told us of the violence they had witnessed in their neighborhoods since they had migrated – including several murders. As one 12-year-old Mexican girl told us: "If you go out in the United States, you are always afraid of everything." A 13-year-old Chinese girl told us: "I have seen gang activities near my house...I am afraid to go out – I don't feel safe." A 14-year-old Dominican boy said: "I don't like being closed in. It is not safe to go out." For poor immigrants from Latin American today, the statistical likelihood of enrolling in a hyper-segregated, deep poverty school is astonishingly high. (Orfield 1998; Trueba 1998) The stresses associated with immigration (see C. Suárez-Orozco 1998; Smart and Smart 1995; Laosa 1989; Padilla et al. 1988; Aronowitz 1984; Shuval 1980; Rumbaut 1977), especially when compounded by violence and poverty, make for less than optimal schooling experiences for many children today.

Social support networks can play a critical role mediating the stresses of immigration. (Cohen and Syme 1985; Willis 1985; Heller and Swinder 1983; Cobb 1976) Such networks – which might include extended family, fictive kin, as well as cultural associations – can facilitate how immigrants navigate their new environments. They can make available resources (ranging from emergency loans to free baby-sitting), critical cultural information (such as about corporal punishment in the new land or what courses are needed in high school to attend the better colleges), and job contacts. The emotional support generated by such social networks is equally important, particularly during the earliest phases of immigration when immigrants face the emotional losses and cultural disorientation which always accompanies immigration (see Ainslie 1998; C. Suárez-Orozco 1998; Garcia-Coll and Manuson 1997; Volkan 1993; Arredondo-Dowd 1981).

Immigration is a process that deeply transforms the family system. (Shuval 1990; Sluzki 1979) In our conceptual model, "family cohesion" refers to the interpersonal atmosphere or "ethos" in the immigrant family. We include patterns of intergenerational relations – particularly important in multigenerational immigrant families – parental supervision, and family conflict. As immigrant youth begin to attempt to navigate the complex, often contradictory waters of "home" and "host" culture, socially constructed hierarchies of authority are often disrupted. The paternal voice may be silenced. Gender scripts often need to be rewritten. Family conflicts often result as immigrants deal with the stresses of uprooting and resettling in the new land.

A number of scholars have argued that new transnational impulses are structuring the journeys of new immigrants in ways that are decidedly different from the experiences of earlier waves of immigrants from Europe and Asia (see Suárez-Orozco 1998). New technologies of communication – including computers, discount telephone cards, and faxes; easier and more affordable systems of mass transportation; along with new social practices and cultural models celebrating ethnic and cultural difference seem to subvert the sharp break with the country of origin that was said to characterize earlier waves of European immigration to the United States. (Ainslie 1998) Many immigrants today are apt to remain players both "here" and "there" circuiting back and forth between the country of their birth and the country of their choice. (Portes 1998)

To date there is no systematic research on how these new transnational practices affect the experiences of immigrant children. In our conceptual model, "maintenance of culture of origin" refers broadly to the nature and intensity of these transnational activities. How is schooling negotiated among youth engaged in intense transnationality – such as new immigrants from the Dominican Republic? How much contact is there with co-ethnics vs. members of other ethnic minorities vs. members of the dominant culture? How much television, video, computer, and radio exposure do the children have to materials from "back home" vs. English-only materials? Are immigrant youth maintaining the language of origin or are they rapidly shifting into English-only? (Portes and Hao 1998; Wong-Filmore 1991) What structures are there in the child's social milieu to support linguistic practices in the first language?

The peer group has been generally neglected in the social science research on immigrant and ethnic minority children. (De Vos 1992: 233-265) Yet in many cases it is the peer group, not the adult group, who is "in charge" in the lives of youth. When immigrant parents are not available to their children – because they face intense work schedules and other stresses, the peer group can become critical. For many youth, the peer group not only is the primary point of reference for values and tastes; it also provides social and emotional support, economic resources, and safety. Peer group orientation can be critical in the schooling strategies deployed by immigrant youth. Is the peer group supportive of school? Can a young woman turn to her peers for help with her homework? Can she turn to them for advice on what school to chose? What courses to take? Or, conversely, is the peer group in an adversarial relation to school? Are good students sanctioned for doing well in school? Is doing well in school constructed as "acting white"? Being a "coconut"? ("Brown on the outside, white on the inside"). Being a "banana"? ("Yellow on the outside, white on the inside.") Because of the emotional relevance of the peer group, the interpersonal tone set by peers is an important variable in the adaptation of immigrant children.

Teacher expectations, likewise, are quite relevant because of the important "social mirroring" functions that teachers perform. Do teachers expect less or more from their immigrant students than from their non-immigrant students? Do teachers have the same expectations of all immigrant students or are there group-specific expectations? Do they expect their immigrant students will go on to college? Drop out of school? Get into gangs? Do some immigrant children benefit from a "halo effect"? Or, conversely, are some immigrant children "brought down" because of negative teacher expectations towards his or her own immigrant group?

While teacher expectations have been singled out as important (see Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968), the more general prevailing attitudes of members of the host society toward immigrants are also highly relevant to the

experiences of immigrant children. How public opinion and general attitudes toward immigration affect the children of immigrants has been neglected in the scholarly literature. Yet we know that in recent years attitudes towards immigration have become increasingly charged.

Public opinion data suggest that there has been a widespread concern about the large influx of new immigrants. Princeton University sociologists Thomas Espenshade and Maryann Belanger have noted that a "growing anxiety over the presence of immigrants in the United States has accompanied the rise in immigration." (1998: 366) A number of public opinion polls reveal negative attitudes towards immigrants: by the mid-1990s over two-thirds of respondents indicated that they did not want to extend the invitation of the Statue of Liberty to new immigrants. (Espenshade and Belanger 1998: 367) In a highly sophisticated study of national public opinion polls by twenty different organizations over a thirty-year period, the Princeton scholars found that historically there has been a very strong correlation between anti-immigrant sentiment and economic anxiety, particularly around unemployment rates. It is no accident, then, that the intensity of anti-immigration sentiment peaked during the economic slump when the unemployment rate hit almost 10% (see Espenshade and Belanger 1998: 367).

Espenshade and Balinger (1998) also found that the fear of the cultural dilution of the country's Anglo-Saxon institutions and values is an enduring concern. Citizens today tend to feel more positive about immigrants from Europe than they do about immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean. Immigrants who do not speak English and who "look" different from the dominant Anglo-European make many non-immigrants uncomfortable.

The Princeton team found that many perceive that immigrants 1) have a negative economic impact, 2) drain the social service system, and 3) contribute to crime with little prospect of assimilation into the mainstream. Though not founded on empirical evidence – the vast majority of immigrants in the U.S. are here legally, are less likely to commit crimes, and are less likely to abuse publicly funded services than non-immigrants – these prevailing beliefs and sentiments have surely contributed to several dramatic anti-immigrant initiatives.

Adults are not the only members of American society who share negative attitudes toward immigrants. Non-immigrant, non-minority students in a public high school in northern California had these thoughts to share with educational researcher Laurie Olsen: "They [immigrants] come to take our jobs, and are willing to break their backs for shit pay, and we can't compete." Another said, "These Chinese kids come over here and all they do is work and work and work and work, and all you have to do is look in the AP classes and you'll see they are filling them up. No one can compete any more." Still another summed up a prevailing fear: "They just want to take over." (Olsen 1998: 68)

California's Proposition 187 – which aims to ban undocumented immigrants from a host of publicly funded services including schooling for children – illustrates the explosive tensions generated by large-scale immigration in a state, which has undergone a severe economic recession (see M. Suárez-Orozco 1996). The draconian 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Responsibility Act is another policy initiative, which some observers have argued will have a harmful effect on large sectors of society. (Hagan 1998) The internal security provision of the new act may usher in a nationwide effort at finger printing, wiretapping, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) linkages with local and state law enforcement, and other measures supposedly designed to combat links between immigration, the drug trade, and terrorism. The act has implications for the civil rights of immigrants and citizens alike – particularly those of color (see Hagan 1998; Suárez-Orozco 1998).

In recent years, we have indeed witnessed a range of policies aimed at excluding immigrants (especially undocumented immigrants) from accessing a variety of publicly funded services. Immigration controls have moved slowly over the years from the border to the classroom (Proposition 187), the hospital (see Brown et al. 1998), and the welfare agency (see Hagan 1998).

In times of economic uncertainty, anti-immigrant sentiments are prevalent and are often voiced with little sense of concern for either political fallout nor the feelings of the targets. Anti-immigrant xenophobia appears to endure as the "last frontier" to openly vent racial and ethnic hostilities with little risk of sanctioning. While overt and blatant racism is today largely confined to the fringes of society, anti-immigrant sentiments seem to be more freely indulged in public opinion, policy debates, and other social forums.

Social Mirroring

The structural exclusion suffered by immigrants – whether documented or undocumented – is detrimental to their ability to participate in the opportunity structure of their new society. Furthermore, we argue that hostile attitudes and social exclusion also play a toxic role in the psychosocial life of immigrant children. How does a child incorporate the notion that she is "an alien," an "illegal," unwanted and not deserving of the most basic rights such as education and health care? Even if they are not undocumented, the hostility prevalent in the current climate radiates to all children with accents and darker complexions. How do these charged attitudes affect the developing identities of the children of immigrants? A first point to consider is whether or not immigrant youth are aware of these hostilities.

As part of the data collection for the LISA project, we asked our informants what the hardest thing about immigration was. The following statements are representative of the kinds of responses we received. A 12-year-old Central American girl said: "One of the most difficult things about immigrating is that people make fun of me here. People from the United States think that they are superior to you." A 13-year-old Chinese girl told us: "[Americans] discriminate. They treat you badly because you are Chinese or Black. I hate this most." An 11-year-old Haitian girl responded: "The hardest thing is when whites yell at Haitians." A 12-year-old Central American boy said: "The most difficult thing about immigration is that we don't know the language and that we are discriminated

against."

We also asked all of our informants to complete the sentence "Most Americans think [people from my country of origin] are_____." Mexican children were asked: "Most Americans think Mexicans are_____," Dominicans were asked: "Most Americans think Domincans are_____"; and so forth. Strikingly, for Latino and Haitian immigrants, the most common response was "Most Americans think that we are bad." Overwhelmingly, the children perceived that "Americans" had negative perceptions about them. Below are other responses we received:

"Most Americans don't think well of us." [14-year-old Central American girl]

"Most Americans think that we are poor people." [9-year-old Chinese girl]

"Most Americans think that we are ignorant." [14-year-old Mexican girl]

"Most Americans think that we are stupid." [10-year-old Haitian girl]

"Most Americans think that we are very impolite." [12-year-old Chinese girl]

"Most Americans think that we don't know anything." [14-year-old Mexican girl]

"Most Americans think that we can't do the same things as them in school or at work." [10-year-old Mexican girl]

"Most Americans think that we are good for nothing." [14-year-old Central American boy]

"Most Americans think that we are useless." [14-year-old Dominican girl]

"Most Americans think that we are garbage." [14-year-old Dominican boy]

"Most Americans think that we are members of gangs." [9-year-old Central American girl]

"Most Americans think that we are thieves." [13-year-old Haitian girl]

"Most Americans think that we are lazy, gangsters, drug-addicts that only come to take their jobs away." [14-year-old Mexican boy]

"Most Americans think that we are bad like all Latinos." [12-year-old Central American boy]

"Most Americans think that we don't exist." [12-year-old Mexican boy]

These alarming data suggest that immigrant youth are well aware of the prevailing ethos of hostily and anti-immigrant sentiment. What do children do, psychologically, with this reception? Are these attitudes ignored? Or are they internalized? How so?

The British object-relations theorist D. W. Winicott (1971) articulated a theory of "mirroring" in self-other relations. Winicott focused much of his writing on the relationship between the mother and infant, adding greatly to our understanding of the significance of this relationship in the formation of identity and the "sense of self." A critical concept in object-relations theory is that of "mirroring." According to Winicott, "...the mother functions as a mirror, providing the infant with a precise reflection of his own experience and gestures, despite their fragmented and formless qualities. 'When I look I am seen, so I exist.'" (Winicott 1971, p. 134) Imperfections in the reflected rendition mar and inhibit the child's capacity for self-experience and integration and interfere with the process of "personalization." (Greenberg and Mitchell 1983:192-3)

The infant is highly dependent upon the reflection of the experience she receives from her mothering figure. The mother provides clues about the environment. In determining whether she need be frightened by new stimuli, the infant will first look to her mother's expression and response. An expression of interest or calm will reassure the infant while an expression of concern will alarm her. Even more crucial is the mother's response to the infant's actions. Does the mother show delight when the infant reaches for an object or does she ignore it, or show disapproval? No one response (or non-response) is likely to have much affect but the accumulation of experiences are significant in the formation of the child's sense of self. A child whose accomplishments are mirrored favorably, is likely to feel more valued than the child whose accomplishments are either largely ignored or worse still, denigrated.

Although the idea of "mirroring" – along with a number of his other concepts – is an important contribution to our understanding of the developing child, Winicott, like many of his psychoanalytic colleagues, failed to fully acknowledge the porwerful force of social systems and culture in shaping self-other relationships. Particularly as the child grows, the mirroring function is by no means the exclusive domain of maternal figures. In fact, with the exception of individuals falling on the autistic spectrum, all human beings are dependent upon the reflection of themselves mirrored back to them by others. "Others" include non-parental relatives, adult care-takers, siblings, teachers, peers, employers, people on the street, and even the media. When the reflected opinion is generally positive, the individual (adult or child) will be able to feel that she is worthwhile and competent. When the reflection is generally negative, it is extremely difficult to maintain an unblemished sense of self-worth for very long.

These reflections can be accurate or inaccurate. In some cases, the reflection can be a positive distortion or what we call a "false good." In such a situation the response to the individual may be out of proportion to his actual contribution or achievement. In the most benign case, positive expectations can be an asset. In the classic "Pygmalion in the Classroom" study (Rosenthal & Jacobson 1968), when teachers believed that certain children were brighter than others (based on the experimentor randomly assigning some children that designation, unsubtantiated in fact), they treated the children more positively and assigned them higher grades.

It is possible that some immigrants, such as some Asians groups, benefit somewhat from positive expectations of their competence as a result of being members of a "model minority" – though no doubt at a cost. (Takaki 1989) In a less benign example of "false good" mirroring, individuals who are surrounded by those who do not inform them of negative feedback and laud even minimal accomplishments, may develop a distorted view of their own abilities and accomplishments.

We are more concerned here, however, with the negative distortion or "false bad" case. What happens to a youth who receives social mirroring that is predominantly negative and

hostile? When the assumptions about him include expectations of sloth, irresponsibility, low intelligence, and even danger, the outcome can be toxic. When these reflections are received in a number of mirrors including the media, the classroom, and the street, the outcome can be devastating. (Adams 1990)

Even when the parents provide positive mirroring, it is often insufficient to compensate for the distorted mirrors that children encounter in their daily lives. In some cases, the immigrant parent is considered "out of touch" with reality. Even when the parental opinion is considered valid, it may not be enough to compensate for the intensity and frequency of the distortions of the House of Mirrors they encounter in their everyday lives. The statements made by the children in our study demonstrate that they are intensely aware of the hostile reception which they are encountering.

What can a child do with these hostilities? There are several possible responses. The most positive possible outcome is to be goaded into "I'll show you. I'll make it in spite of what you think of me." This response, while theoretically possible, is relatively infrequent. Others might attempt to defend themselves by denying the negative attitudes and hostilities they encounter. More likely, youth respond with self-doubt and shame, in some cases setting low aspirations in a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy: "They are probably right. I'll never be able to do it." Yet another response is one of, "You think I'm bad. Let me show you how bad I can be."

Identities and Styles of Coping

It is clear then, that "incoming resources" and "host culture variables" help us a great deal in telling the story of the paths immigrant children are able to make for themselves in the new country. However, that tells only a partial story. Identity and agency, including changing social practices and cultural models, must also be factored into any satisfactory accounting of the immigrant experience..

The LISA study is guided by new theoretical perspectives on the study of identities. In recent years few scholarly topics have attracted as much attention as the issue of identity. A generation ago the study of identity was dominated by a handful of subdisciplines – dominant among them, developmental psychology. (Erikson 1968) Today significant numbers of social scientists in anthropology, sociology, political science – along with scholars in the humanities – have begun, seemingly en masse, to caliber their various disparate analytical tools to examine this most modern of topics. (Kagan, Appiah, and Noam 1998)

Traditionally, psychologists theorized "identity" in the singular. (Phinney 1998) On the other hand, the new work by anthropologists and sociologists highlights the plural "identities" – underscoring a desire to distance their work from what they see as the old Freudian/Eriksonian master narrative depicting a unilinear developmental epic journey of separation and individuation into maturity, autonomy, and coherence. In the words of Kagan, "The error in the elaborations of the Eriksonian concept of identity was to assume that each person had a fixed identity that remained relatively unchanged across varied social contexts and that this hypothetical structure was unified in some way." (Kagan et al. 1998: 1) The one-size-fits-all approach to identity ran its course as concerns over reductionism and essentialism took center stage in the social sciences.

In our research we situate the study of identities in various fields of power – fields structured by the complex and often contradictory workings of class, religion, race and color, gender and sex, age, and disabilities. We approach the study of immigrant identities in the context of contexts: as multiple and fluid constructions in constant formation and transformation as children attempt to manage their daily "migrations" from the world of home and neighborhood to the world of peers and schools and, eventually, the world of work.

We suggest that as youth attempt to transverse these substantially discontinuous cultural, political, and economic spaces, they struggle to develop identities gravitating towards one of three dominant styles of adaptation: 1) an "ethnic flight style," 2) an "adversarial style," and 3) a "bicultural style." We view these styles of adaptation as ideal types. A single child, depending on her age at migration, race, and socio-economic background and, very importantly, the context of resettlement in the United States, may first gravitate to one style of adaptation but eventually as her contexts change and as she matures, may develop another dominant style of adaptation. We do not see these styles as fixed, mutually exclusive styles. We hypothesize that contexts, opportunities, and networks act as powerful gravitational fields shaping the adaptation styles of immigrant children.

Ethnic Flight Styles

Youth clustering around the "ethnic flight" style often struggle to "mimic" the dominant group and may attempt to join them, leaving their own ethnic group behind. An earlier corpus of social science research examined the related issue of "passing" among members of some ethnic minority groups. Individuals who choose this route will often have unresolved issues of what Erik Erikson called "shame and doubt" (Erikson 1968: 110-114) which they may struggle to overcompensate. These youth would tend to deny or minimize the negative social mirroring they might encounter. Richard Rodriguez's (1982) autobiography captures many of these issues in devastating detail. Many immigrant youth who deploy this style may feel more comfortable networking with peers from the dominant culture. For these youth learning standard English may serve not only instrumental purposes but also often may become an important symbolic act of identification with the dominant culture (see Rodriguez 1982). Among these youth, success in school may be seen as a route for instrumental mobility but also as a way to symbolically and psychologically dissemble and gain distance from the world of family and ethnic group.

These are immigrants who travel their journey with light affective baggage. The idiom that "making it" takes for these youth tends to be independence and individualistic self-advancement. These students may "imprint" with the cultural styles and attitudes of their peers from the dominant society, which may be a less than optimal strategy for school success (see Steinberg 1996; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-

Orozco 1995).

Among these youth, typically, the culturally constituted patterns of parental authority lose legitimacy – for them, parents are "out of it" and their ways, moral codes, values and expectations are rejected as anachronistic and out of current in the new country. While this style of adaptation might have been consciously and unconsciously deployed by earlier waves of immigrants – especially those from Europe for whom their phenotype allowed them the option of "passing" – from the vantage point of late 20th century immigration we are witnessing, in the words of George De Vos, "the passing of passing." (1992: 266-299) For many immigrants of color today this option is simply not a "viable ethnic option." (Waters 1990)

Adversarial Styles

Youth clustering around "adversarial styles" of adaptation structure their identities around a schismogenic process (Bateson 1958: 171-197) of rejection by the institutions of the dominant culture – including schools and the formal economy. These are children who are pushed out and drop out of schools at a time when the U.S. economy is generating virtually no meaningful jobs for those without formal schooling. (Orfield 1998) Among these youth the culturally constituted parental authority function – Lacan's *nom du père* – is typically severely corroded. These youth, therefore, tend to have serious problems with their own parents and relatives (see Vigil 1988), and tend to gravitate towards those sharing their predicament – their peers. In many such cases, the peer group, not the elders, are in charge in the lives of these children.

Negative social mirroring may result in an attitude of, "Let me show you how bad I can be." Luis Rodriguez, the child of Mexican immigrants in southern California recalls his early experiences in school: "You were labeled from the start. I'd walk into the counselor's office for whatever reason and looks of disdain greeted me – one meant for a criminal, alien, to be feared. Already a thug. It was harder to defy this expectation than just accept it and fall into the trappings. It was a jacket I could try to take off, but they kept putting it back on. The first hint of trouble and preconceptions proved true. So why not be proud? Why not be an outlaw? Why not make it our own?" (1993: 84)

From this situation typically emerge "gangs" structured around the margins of the dominant society and constructing spaces of competence in the underground or alternative economy and the counter-culture. John Ogbu and his colleagues have argued that in contexts of severe inequality and ethnic antagonism among many youth staying in school, learning standard English, and school success may elicit severe peer group sanctioning when it is labeled a wish to "act white" or be a "coconut." (Ogbu and Simons 1998)

Bicultural Styles

Youths clustering around "bicultural styles" deploy what we have termed "transnational strategies." These children typically emerge as "cultural brokers" mediating the often conflicting cultural currents of home culture and host culture. These youth respond to negative mirroring by identifying it, naming it, and resisting it. These youth craft their identities in "the hyphen," linking aspects of the discontinuous, and at times incommensurable, cultural systems they find themselves inhabiting. Some of these youth will achieve bicultural and bilingual competencies as an integral part of their identities. These are youth for whom the culturally constructed social strictures and patterns of social control of immigrant parents and elders maintain a degree of legitimacy. These will be youth who network, with equal ease, among members of their own ethnic group as well as with students and teachers of other backgrounds.

Among those who are successful and "make it" in the idioms of the dominant society, issues of "reparation" often become important components of their life trajectories. In some such cases, when one's success appears in the context of the sacrifice of loved ones – who struggled to give them opportunities in the new land, feelings of reparative guilt are quite common. (Suárez-Orozco 1989) Among many such youth, success in school will have not only instrumental meanings – for example to achieve self-advancement, better paying opportunities, and independence – but also important "expressive" meanings (i.e., making the parental sacrifices "worthwhile" by "becoming a somebody," etc.). To "make it" for these students may well take the idiom of "giving back" to parents, siblings, peers, and other members of the community.

Concluding Thoughts

In surveying the recent scholarship in the field of immigration, it becomes obvious that a critical but understudied and under-theorized aspect of immigration today is the experiences of children. Immigrant children, many of them poor, are entering American public schools in unprecedented numbers when large inner-city districts are in crisis – some, indeed, near collapse. Many immigrant children today tend to enroll in highly segregated, poor, and violent inner-city schools. Many of these schools are overpopulated and understaffed. Qualified teachers are needed. Bilingual education – eternally controversial in the U.S. – has faced a head-on challenge in California – the state most heavily impacted by immigration. While many immigrant children do extraordinarily well in schools, others are leaving schools before acquiring the tools to successfully navigate today's bitterly competitive global economy. Many immigrant youngsters who give up on school before graduating will join their relatives in the ethnic economy and service sector, while others may gravitate towards a gang culture ready to quickly socialize new arrivals into a lucrative alternative economy – where drug taking and dealing is a growing part of the economic and cultural ethos.

When it comes to immigration today, race and ethnicity matter. They matter, first and foremost, because nearly 80% of all immigrants today are from the non-European, non-English-speaking, "developing world." In the new argot of American multiculturalism, they are "people of color." Whether new immigrants have a cultural category to conceive of themselves as "people of color" or not is quite irrelevant; that is the category that will be mirrored to them.

The color line is, as W.E. DuBois prophetically described it over a century ago, the "problem" line in Ameri-

can society. Some of the questions that need to be asked include: How do phenotypically – but alas, not culturally black – new immigrants react to the ever-charged folk racial categories in the American setting? How does a Dominican child respond when she suddenly discovers she is black? (Even though her self-concept is not black, in the American sense.) What does it mean for a Guatemalan boy to discover he is now Latino? What happens in a Mexican immigrant family when the daughter tells her parents "I'm Chicana"? Does the panethnic "Asian" label resonate with an immigrant child from China? How do these transformations in racial and ethnic self-identities affect, if at all, the schooling of children? Is an immigrant youth who identifies herself as Haitian more likely to do better in school than one who self-identifies as African-American? Does it matter, in terms of schooling outcomes, if a Spanish-speaking Dominican youth identifies as African-American or Latino?

Like race and ethnicity, gender is a key factor in the schooling of immigrant youth. How do the immigrants' cultural models and expectations of gender appropriate-behaviors fit or not fit mainstream American cultural models and expectations? Do immigrant parents have the same expectations, in terms of schooling, for boys and girls? Why is it that, other things being equal, among nearly all immigrant groups, girls do better in school than immigrant boys?

The current research on immigration is quite uneven. During the 1960s there was concentrated research effort on issues of race, poverty, and education, mostly focused on African-Americans and poor whites. Since the 1980s, at a time when immigration to American cities was intensifying, there has been an erosion of progress in basic research on urban issues. We know much about some topics and next to nothing about others. Much of the work on immigration today is superficial and contradictory – such as the work on the fiscal consequences of immigration. In the area of children the research is quite scattered: there is some work on bilingual education, some work on the law, some work on health, some work on students in high school, and some work on the transition to college and the world of work. But there is a lack of basic research on a variety of problems.

Immigration will continue to be a powerful vector of change. We need a better understanding of how immigration is transforming the United States and the world. We need a major research agenda to examine the long causes and consequences of immigration to the United States. We need better theoretical understandings of multiple paths taken by immigrants in their long-term adaptations. We need more interdisciplinary dialogue. ■

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